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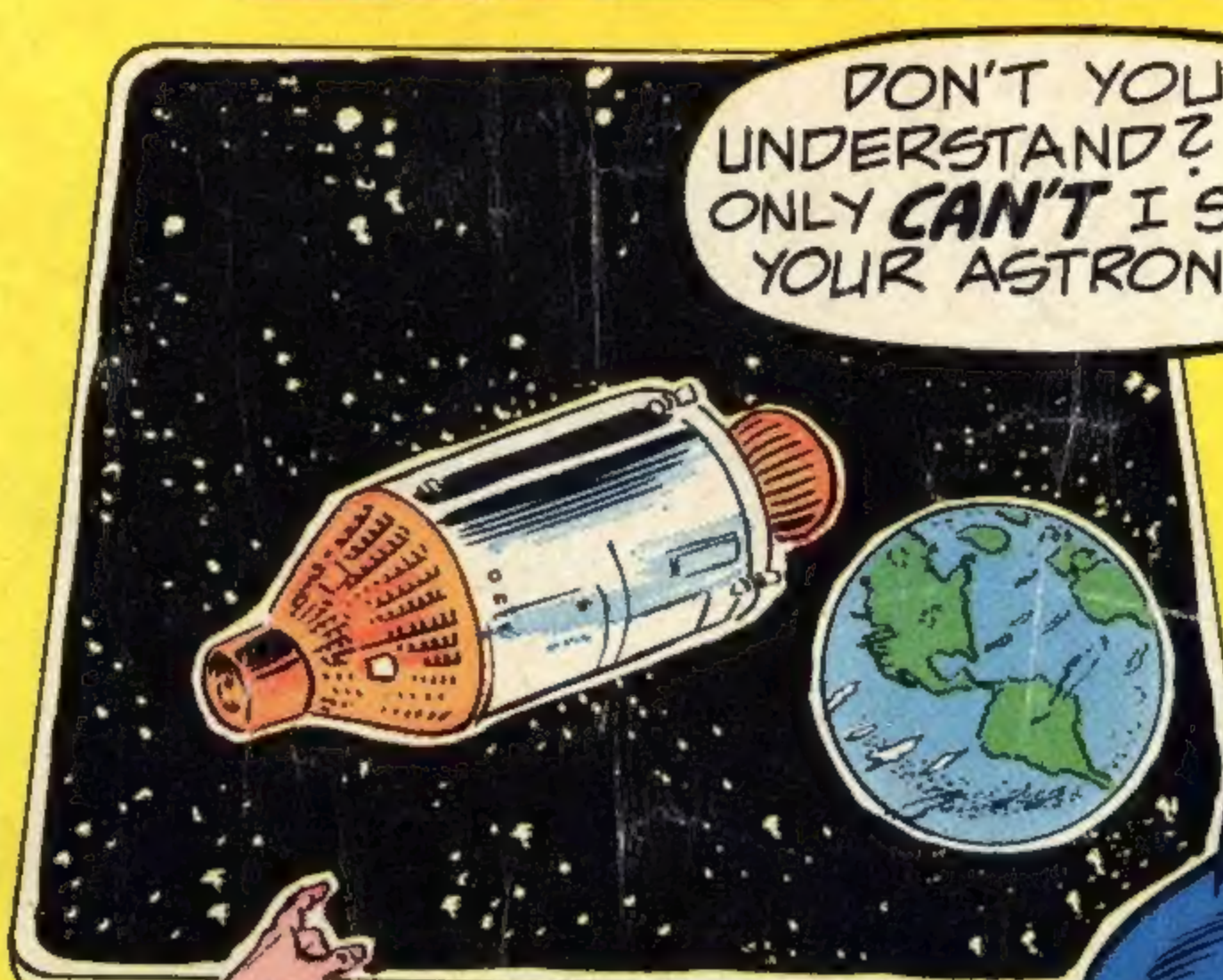
SUPER-X?

WHAT WAS THE SHOCKING SECRET
OF SUPERMAN'S 3RD IDENTITY?

52
BIG pages
DON'T TAKE LESS
ONLY
25¢



ACTION COMICS



DON'T YOU
UNDERSTAND? NOT
ONLY **CAN'T** I SAVE
YOUR ASTRONAUT--

--BUT
I
WON'T!



**"The HERO SUPERMAN
DOOMED TO DIE!"**
**PLUS "The ATOM'S
PHANTOM DOUBLE!"**

52 PAGES 25¢

BIGGER AND BETTER

DC

ACTION COMICS

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BIGGER AND BETTER

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01M

SUPERMAN

THE GRIM SPECTRE OF IMPENDING DOOM HANGS HEAVY OVER THE HOUSTON SPACE CENTER ONE MORNING...

WE HAVEN'T SPOKEN WITH CARTER SINCE EARLY LAST NIGHT, **SUPERMAN!** WE DON'T KNOW **WHAT** CAUSED THE COMMUNICATIONS BREAKDOWN!

I CAME AS SOON AS I RECEIVED YOUR CALL!

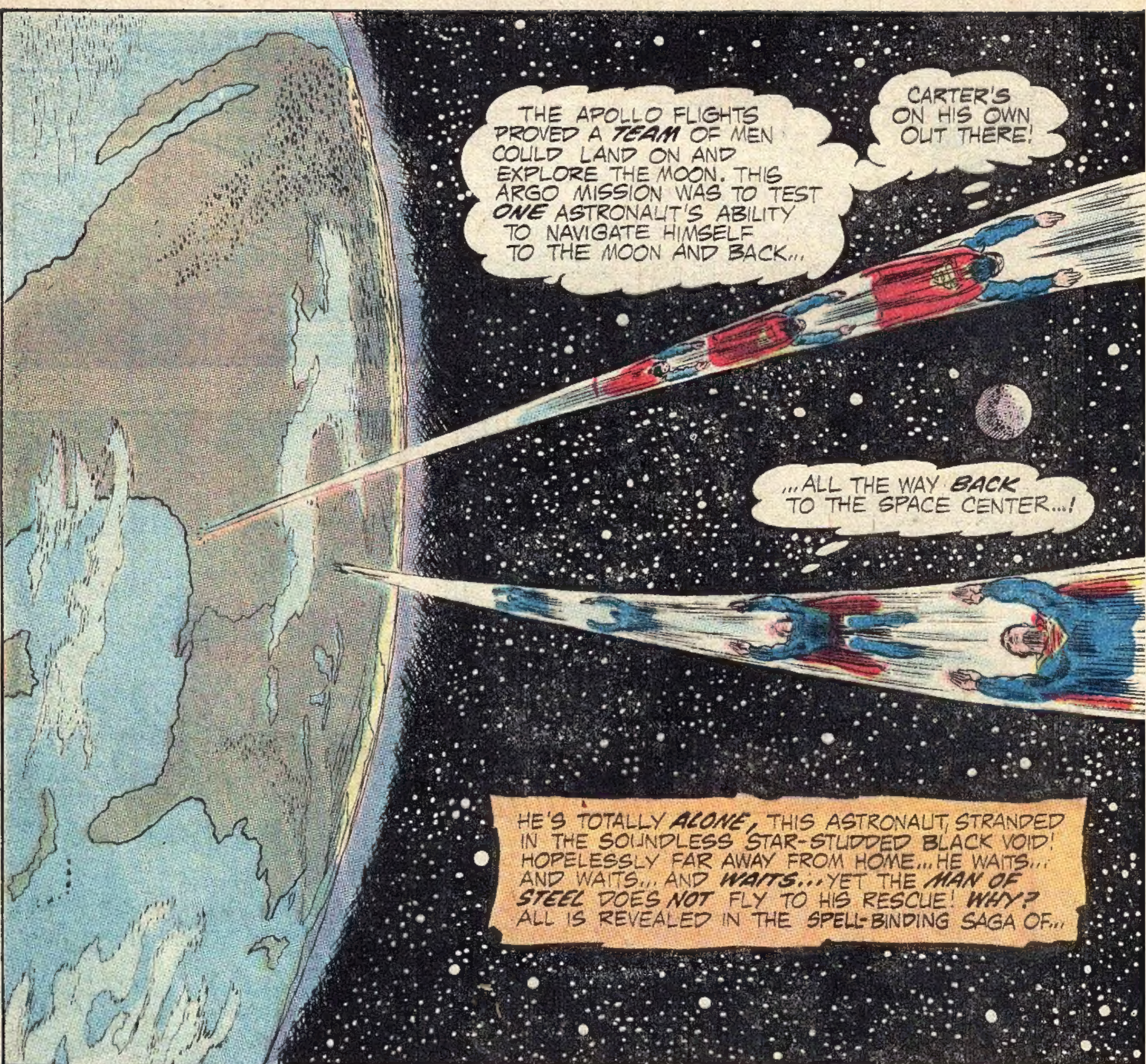
THE **ARGO I** IS STRANDED 100,000 MILES OUT IN SPACE! ALTHOUGH WE CAN'T TALK TO COLONEL CARTER, WE **KNOW** HE'S STILL **ALIVE!** OUR INSTRUMENTS STILL MONITOR HIS **HEARTBEAT!**

BUT YOU ARE THE ONLY HOPE HE HAS OF BEING RESCUED. WE CAN'T BRING HIM HOME BECAUSE WE HAVEN'T THE MEANS!

ANYTHING ELSE YOU CAN BRIEF ME ON?

THE **ARGO'S** EMERGENCY OXYGEN SUPPLY WILL LAST FOR ABOUT ANOTHER **8 HOURS!** AFTER THAT-- CARTER HAS **NO CHANCE** OF SURVIVAL!

TAKE IT EASY, GENTLEMEN! I'LL RETRIEVE YOUR ASTRONAUT!



THE APOLLO FLIGHTS PROVED A **TEAM** OF MEN COULD LAND ON AND EXPLORE THE MOON. THIS ARGO MISSION WAS TO TEST **ONE** ASTRONAUT'S ABILITY TO NAVIGATE HIMSELF TO THE MOON AND BACK...

CARTER'S ON HIS OWN OUT THERE!

...ALL THE WAY **BACK** TO THE SPACE CENTER...!

HE'S TOTALLY **ALONE**, THIS ASTRONAUT, STRANDED IN THE SOUNDLESS STAR-STUDDED BLACK VOID! HOPELESSLY FAR AWAY FROM HOME... HE WAITS... AND WAITS... AND **WAITS**... YET THE **MAN OF STEEL** DOES NOT FLY TO HIS RESCUE! **WHY?** ALL IS REVEALED IN THE SPELL-BINDING SAGA OF...



IF HIS SHIP'S IN TROUBLE, I'LL--

WHAT'S HAPPENING--?

I'M BEING FORCED TO **TURN AROUND**...

THE HERO SUPERMAN DOOMED TO DIE!

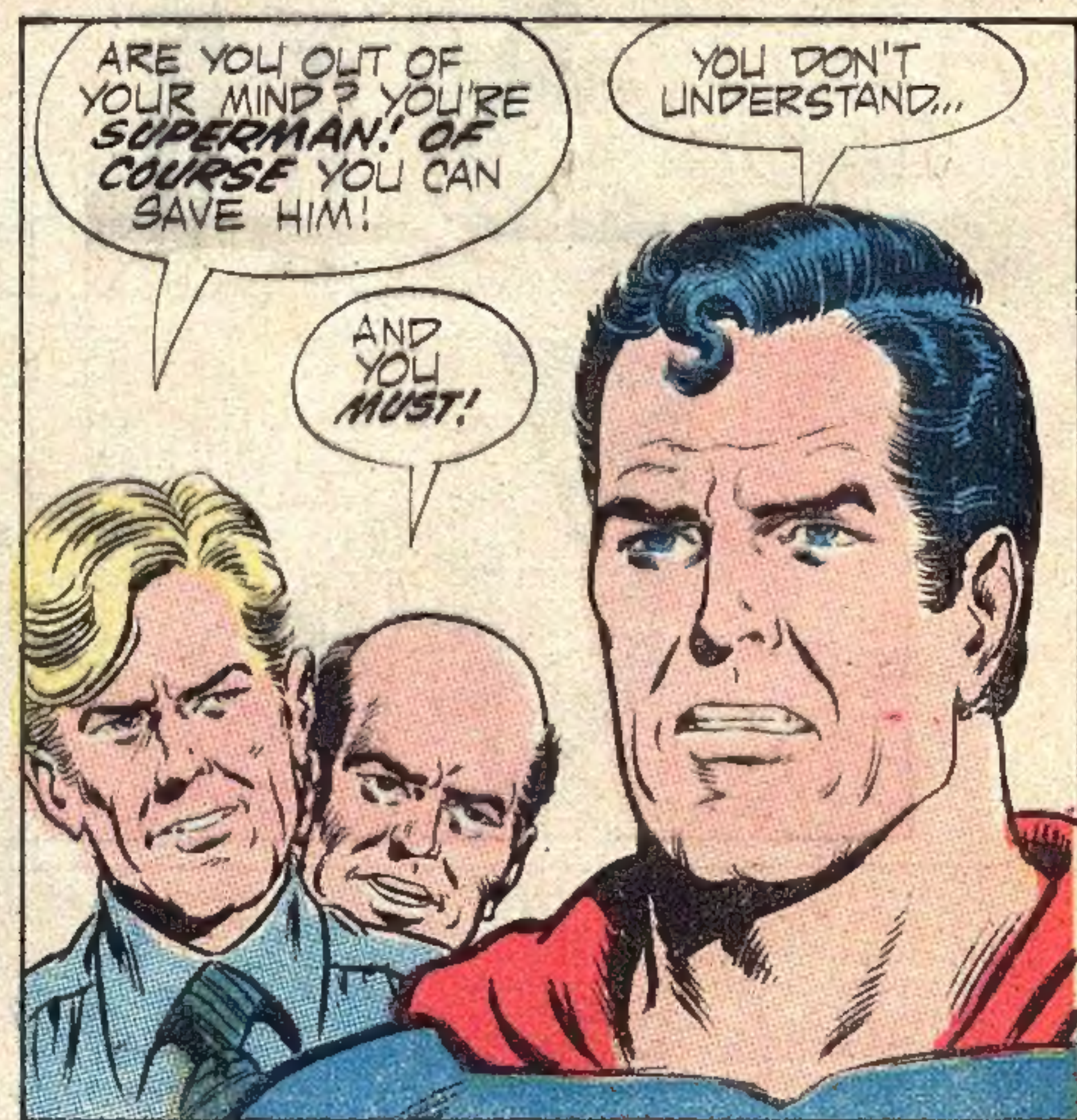
ART: SWAN AND ANDERSON - STORY: CARY BATES



SUPERMAN!? BACK ALREADY? BUT--BUT WHERE'S CARTER?

WHAT'S WRONG?

I--I CAN'T SAVE HIM!



ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND? YOU'RE **SUPERMAN!** OF COURSE YOU CAN SAVE HIM!

AND YOU **MUST!**

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND...

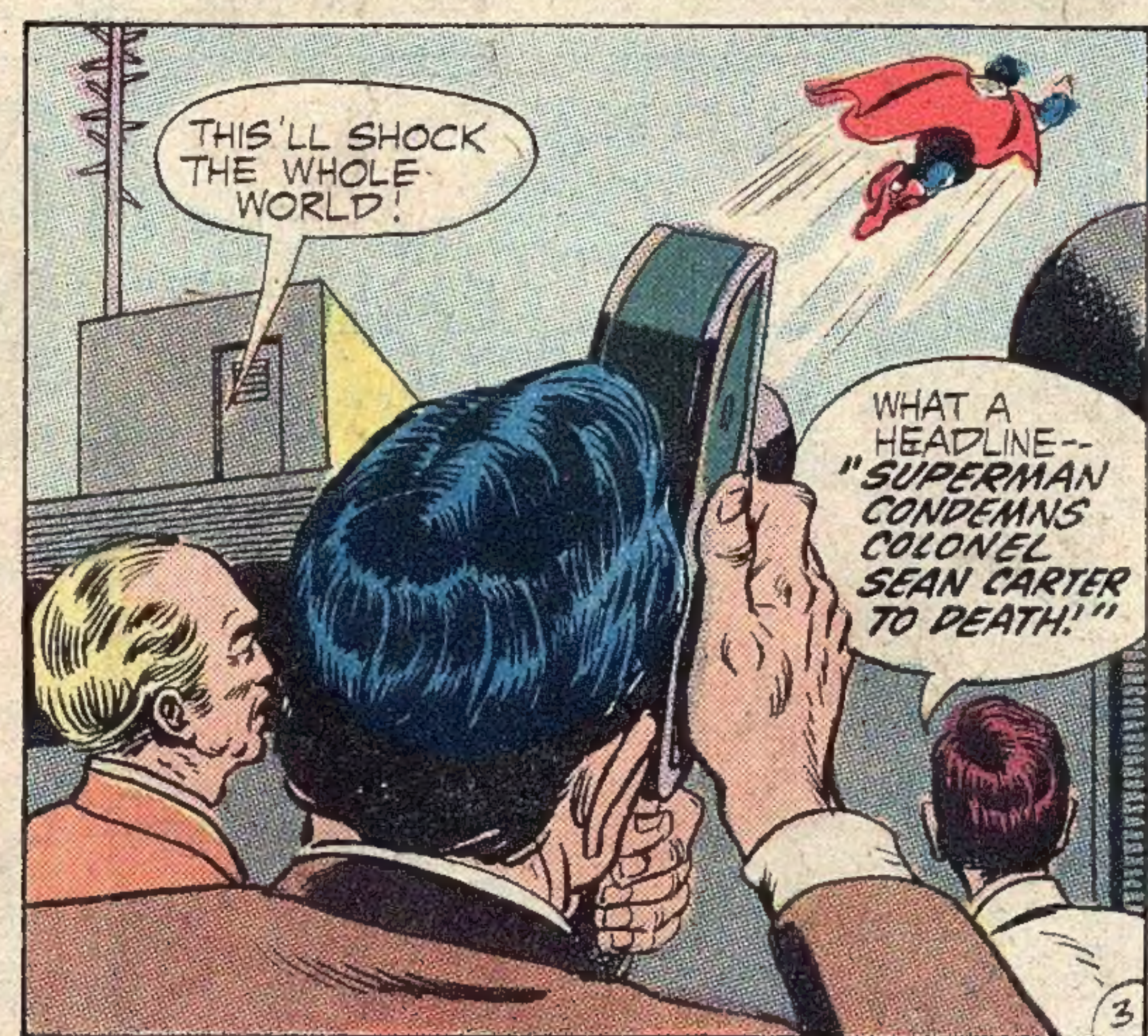


...I CAN'T **SAVE YOUR ASTRONAUT!**

THERE'S NOTHING MORE FOR ME TO SAY!

GOOD LORD! DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING?!

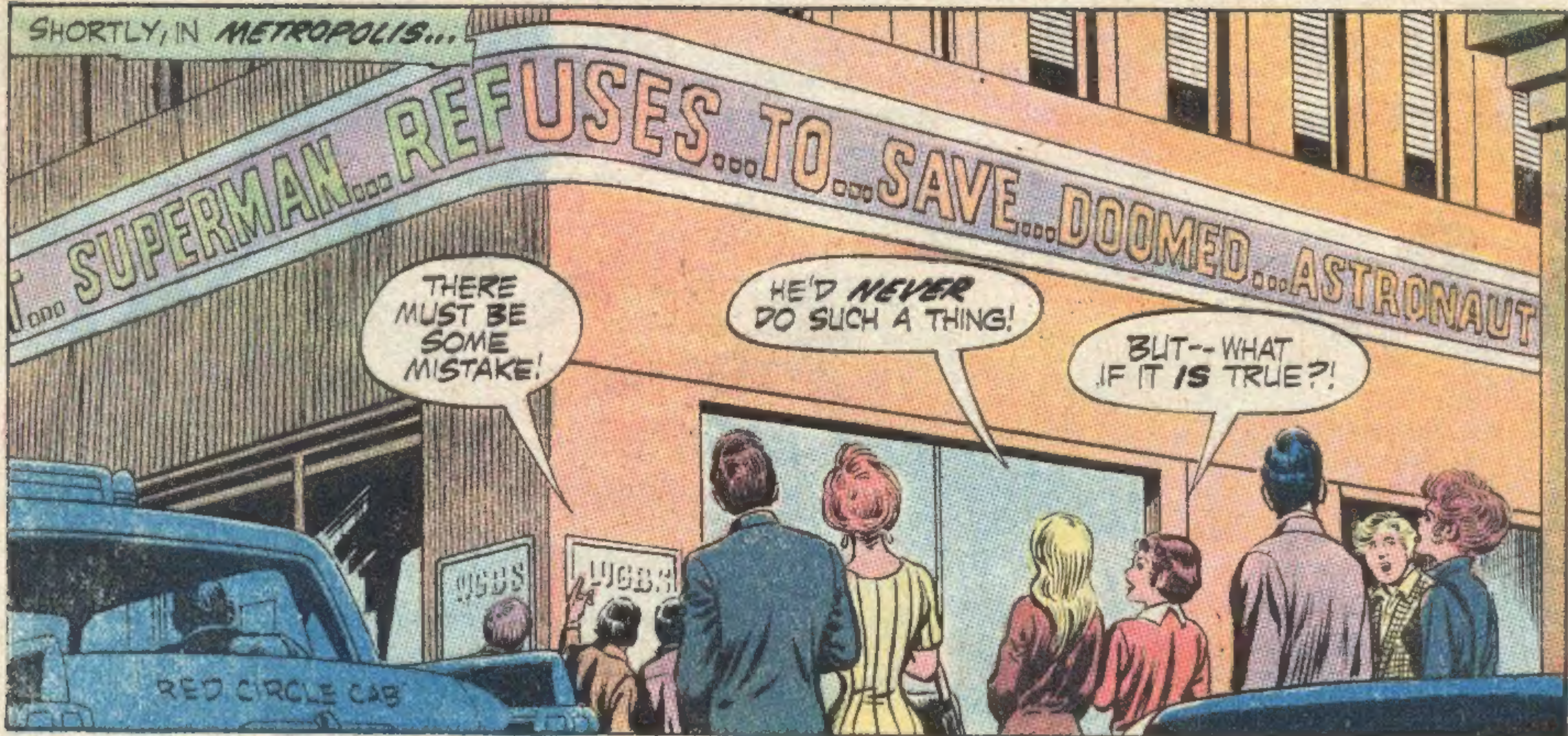
I DON'T BELIEVE MY EARS!



THIS'LL SHOCK THE WHOLE WORLD!

WHAT A HEADLINE-- "**SUPERMAN CONDEMNS COLONEL SEAN CARTER TO DEATH!**"

SHORTLY, IN METROPOLIS...



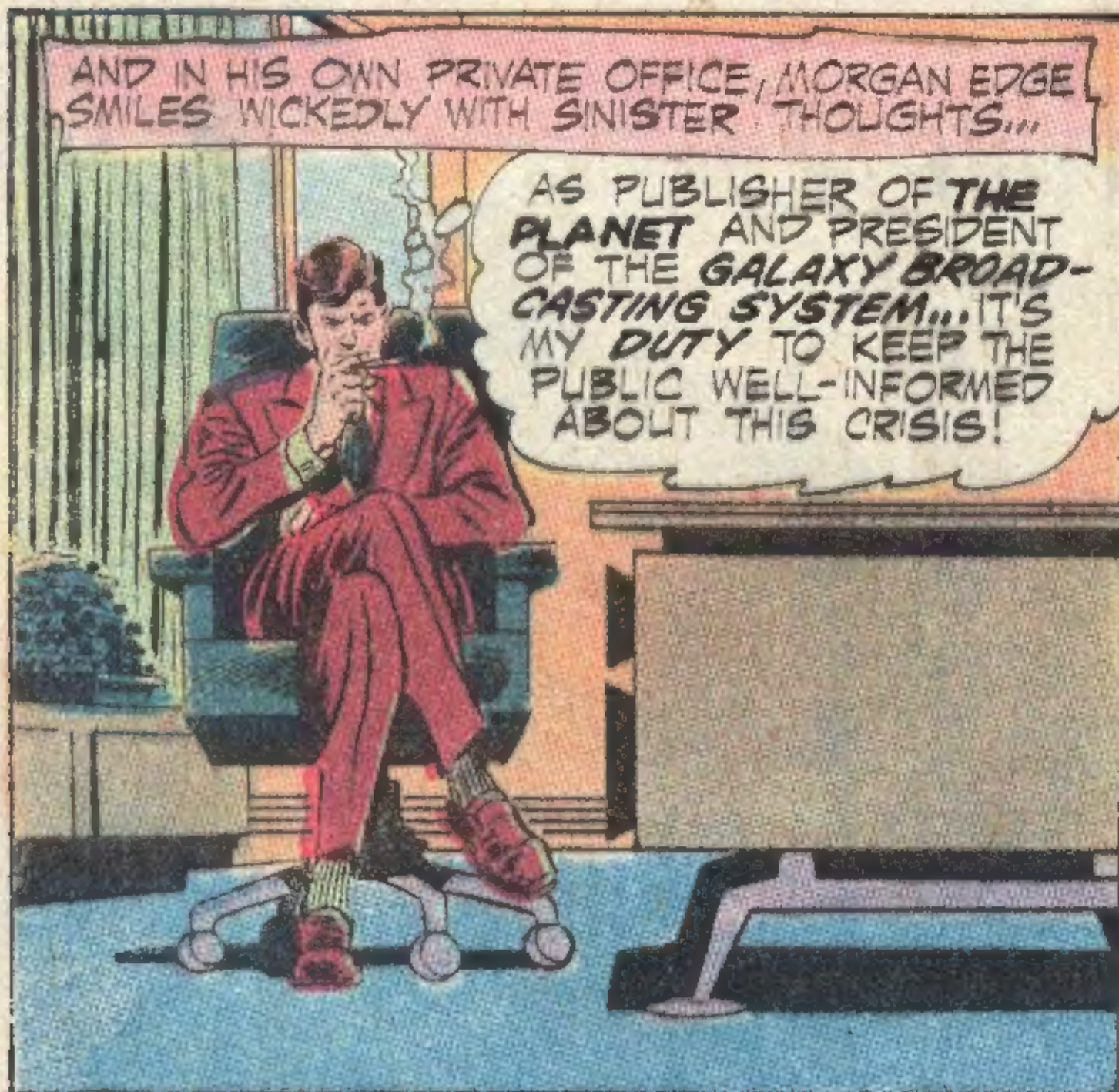
AND IN THE OFFICE OF **DAILY PLANET** EDITOR PERRY WHITE...



I HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT, LOIS!



AND IN HIS OWN PRIVATE OFFICE, MORGAN EDGE SMILES WICKEDLY WITH SINISTER THOUGHTS...



BUT AS A **SECRET AGENT** FOR THE VILLAINOUS **DARK-SEID**, MY INSTRUCTIONS ARE TO UTILIZE ALL THE **MEDIA** AT MY COMMAND... TO RUIN **SUPERMAN'S** REPUTATION!



BUT WHILE AN APPREHENSIVE WORLD AWAITS A MAN'S FATE IN SPACE, **SUPERMAN** CONTINUES HIS CHORES, THIS TIME DELIVERING A SHIPWRECK VICTIM TO METROPOLIS HOSPITAL...

LUCKILY, I CAME ACROSS THIS CRITICALLY INJURED SEAMAN--

BUT MY **TELESCOPIC VISION** IS SPOTTING A DISTURBANCE MILES AWAY IN A SLUM DISTRICT!

HOW CAN I HANDLE **BOTH**?



I'LL HAVE TO **IMPROVISE!**

THIS WILL GIVE ME THE TIME I NEED TO DROP THE SAILOR OFF AT THE **EMERGENCY WARD...**

...BUT MY AIM WITH **THIS** MUST BE **RIGHT ON TARGET!**



THRUST INTO THE AIR WITH **SUPER-FORCE**, A GUSHING TORRENT ARCS HIGH OVER THE CITY LIKE A LIQUID RAINBOW...

LOOK--UP IN THE SKY! IT'S SOME SORT OF **PHENOMENON!**



THOSE STREET GANGS ARE AT IT AGAIN!

THE THIRD BRAWL THIS MONTH!

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO **STOP** THEM?





SSSS PPPL LLAASSHHH



SUPERMAN!

HE'S
THE ONE
WHO DID
IT!

YEAH!
LET'S
FORGET
OUR
RUMBLE--
AND GET
OUTA
HERE!



GOOD! I HOPED
MY CLOUDBURST
WOULD SOAK
THE FIGHT OUT
OF THEM!

HEY,
SUPER-
HERO--

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING.



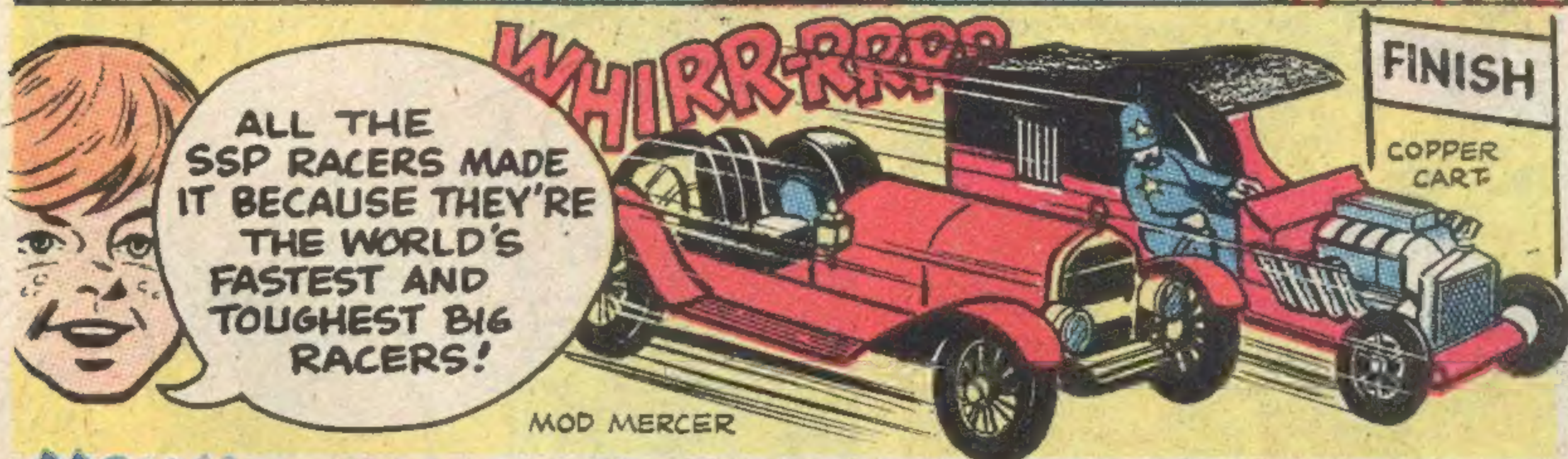
YOU GUYS THINK YOU'RE MAN ENOUGH TO TAKE ON THESE OBSTACLES?

YOU BET - OUR **NEW SSP'S** ARE THE **WORLD'S FASTEST BIG RACERS!**

TAKES ON THE GRUELING OBSTACLE RUN!



**READY TO RACE!
NO TRACKS! NO BATTERIES!
GYRO-POWERED!**



KIDS-
PUT YOUR SSP RACERS TO ANY TEST - ON ANY OBSTACLE COURSE - INDOORS OR OUTDOORS! THEY'RE THE **WINNERS!**

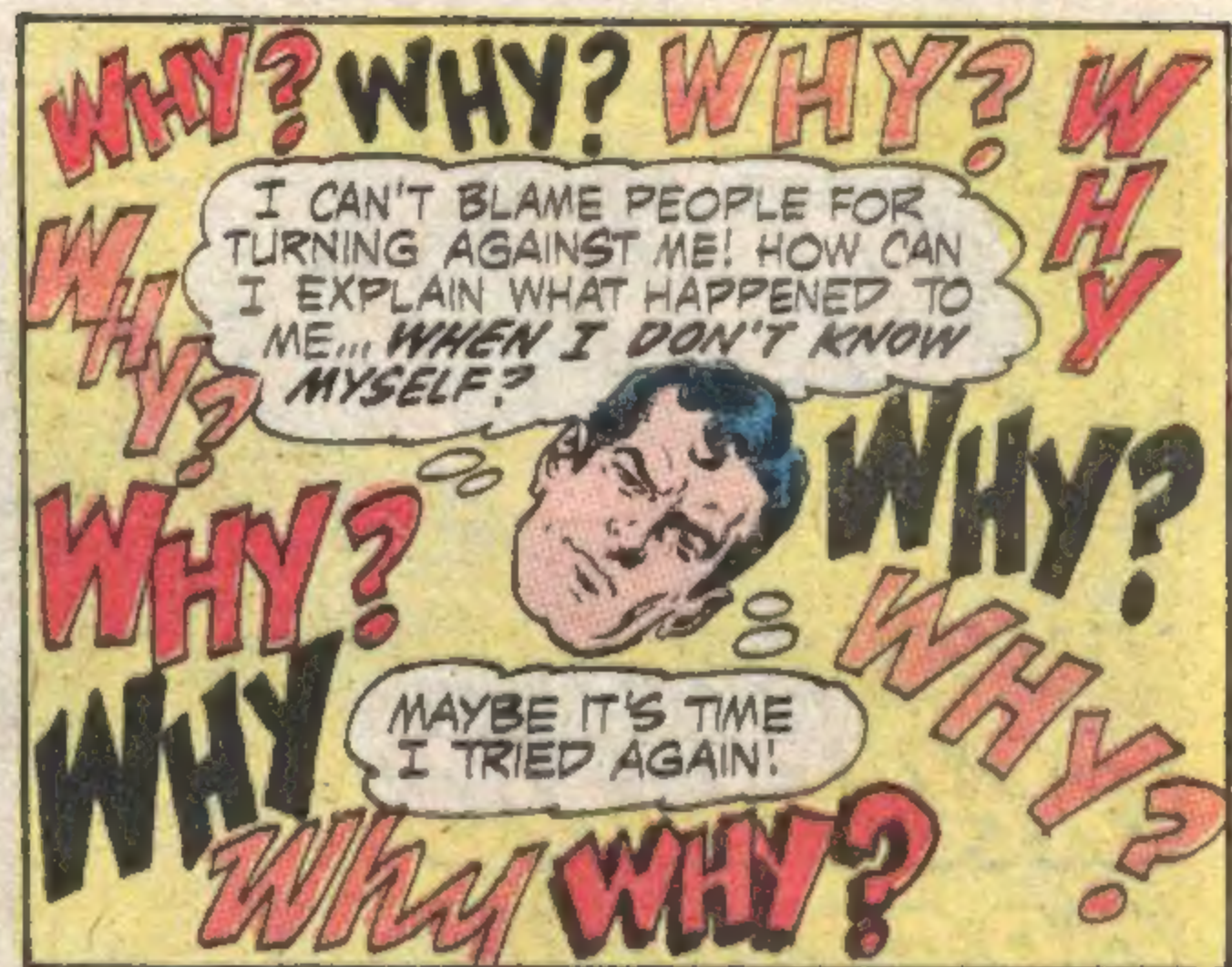
NOW! 17 KENNER SSP RACERS! COLLECT & RACE 'EM ALL!



YOU'RE A **CHAMP** WHEN IT COMES TO COOLING OFF SOME HOT-HEADED KIDS--

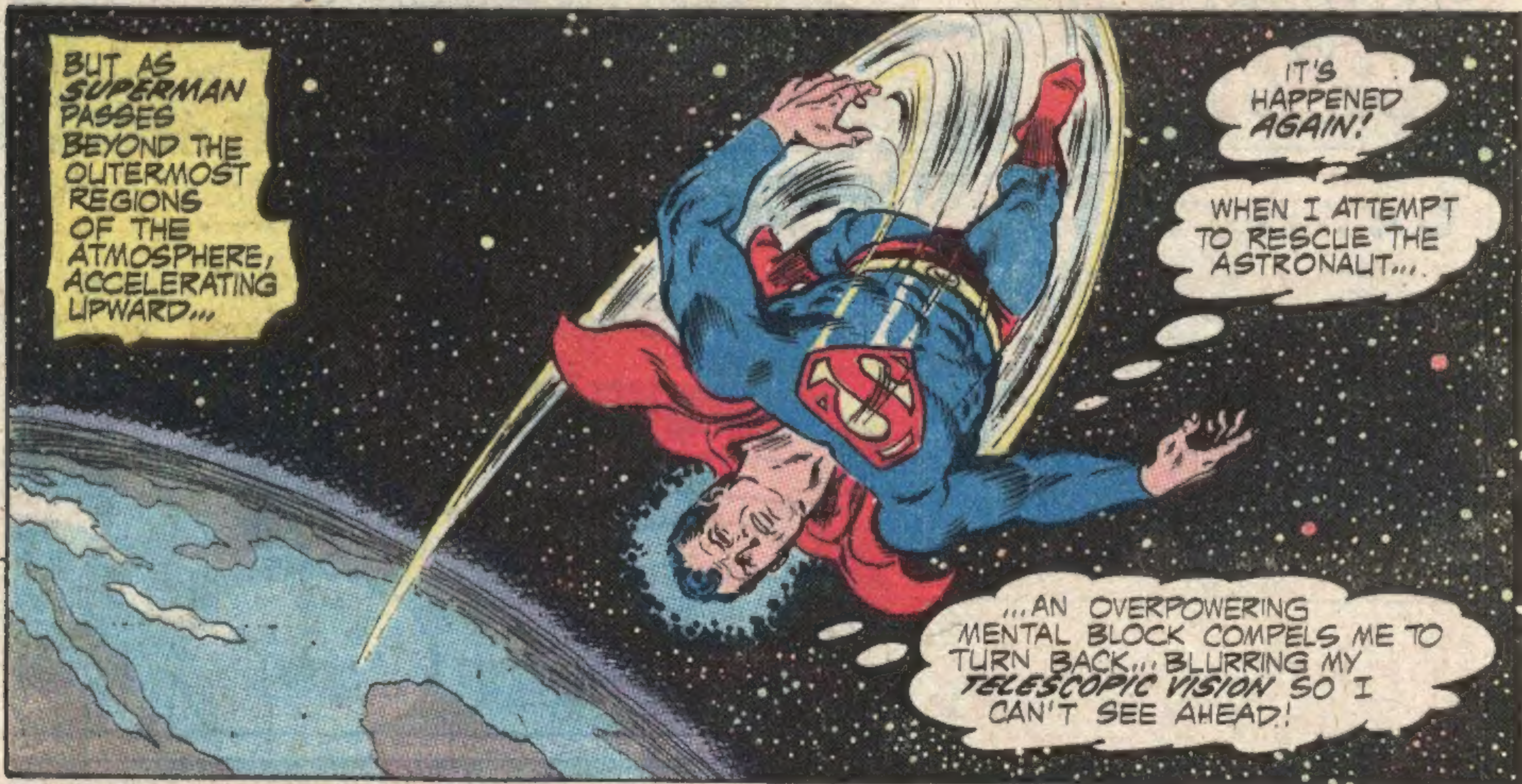
--BUT HOW COME YOU TURN YOUR BACK WHEN THERE'S A REAL **BIG** EMERGENCY?

YEAH, WHY DID YOU LEAVE THAT BRAVE ASTRONAUT UP THERE TO DIE?



WHY? WHY? WHY? WHY?
I CAN'T BLAME PEOPLE FOR TURNING AGAINST ME! HOW CAN I EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENED TO ME... WHEN I DON'T KNOW MYSELF?

MAYBE IT'S TIME I TRIED AGAIN!



BUT AS **SUPERMAN** PASSES BEYOND THE OUTERMOST REGIONS OF THE ATMOSPHERE, ACCELERATING UPWARD...

IT'S HAPPENED AGAIN!

WHEN I ATTEMPT TO RESCUE THE ASTRONAUT...

...AN OVERPOWERING MENTAL BLOCK COMPELS ME TO TURN BACK... BLURRING MY TELESCOPIC VISION SO I CAN'T SEE AHEAD!



WHAT CAN THAT TERRIBLE **TELEPATHIC POWER** BE THAT KEEPS ME GROUNDED? IS A FORMER FOE STRIKING BACK AT ME WITH **MENTAL WARFARE**? IS IT THE WORK OF HOSTILE ALIENS WHO MAY HAVE INTERCEPTED THE **ARGO I**?

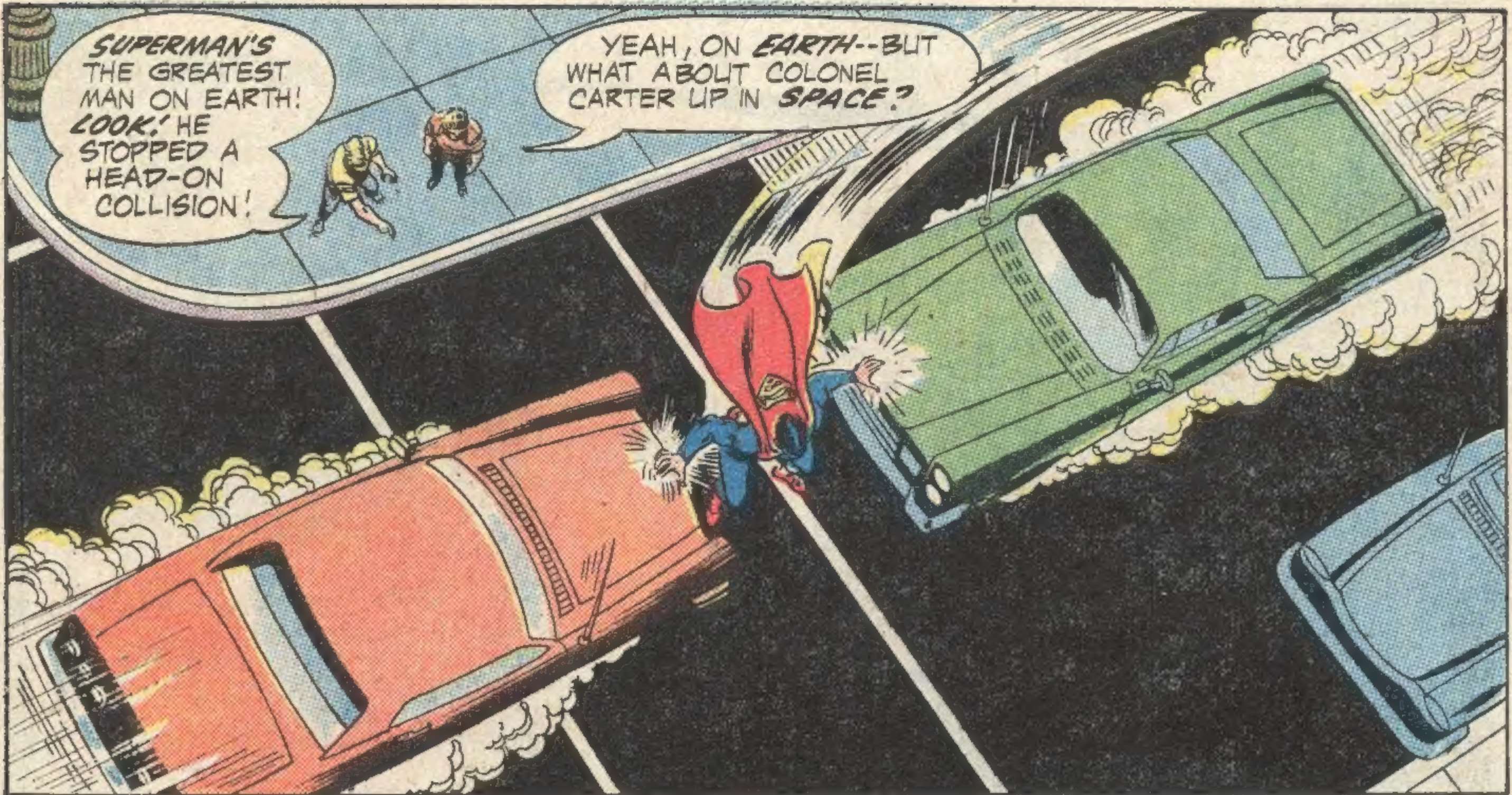
HOW CAN I FIND THE ANSWER?



MAYBE HE'S **SICK**--AND THAT'S WHY HE CAN'T GO UP THERE!

ARE YOU CRAZY? **SUPERMAN NEVER GETS SICK!**

IF YOU ASK ME, IT'S HIS **EGO**! HE FIGURES HE'S TOO IMPORTANT TO BE CHASING AFTER SOME ASTRONAUT!



SUPERMAN'S THE GREATEST MAN ON EARTH! LOOK! HE STOPPED A HEAD-ON COLLISION!

YEAH, ON EARTH--BUT WHAT ABOUT COLONEL CARTER UP IN SPACE?

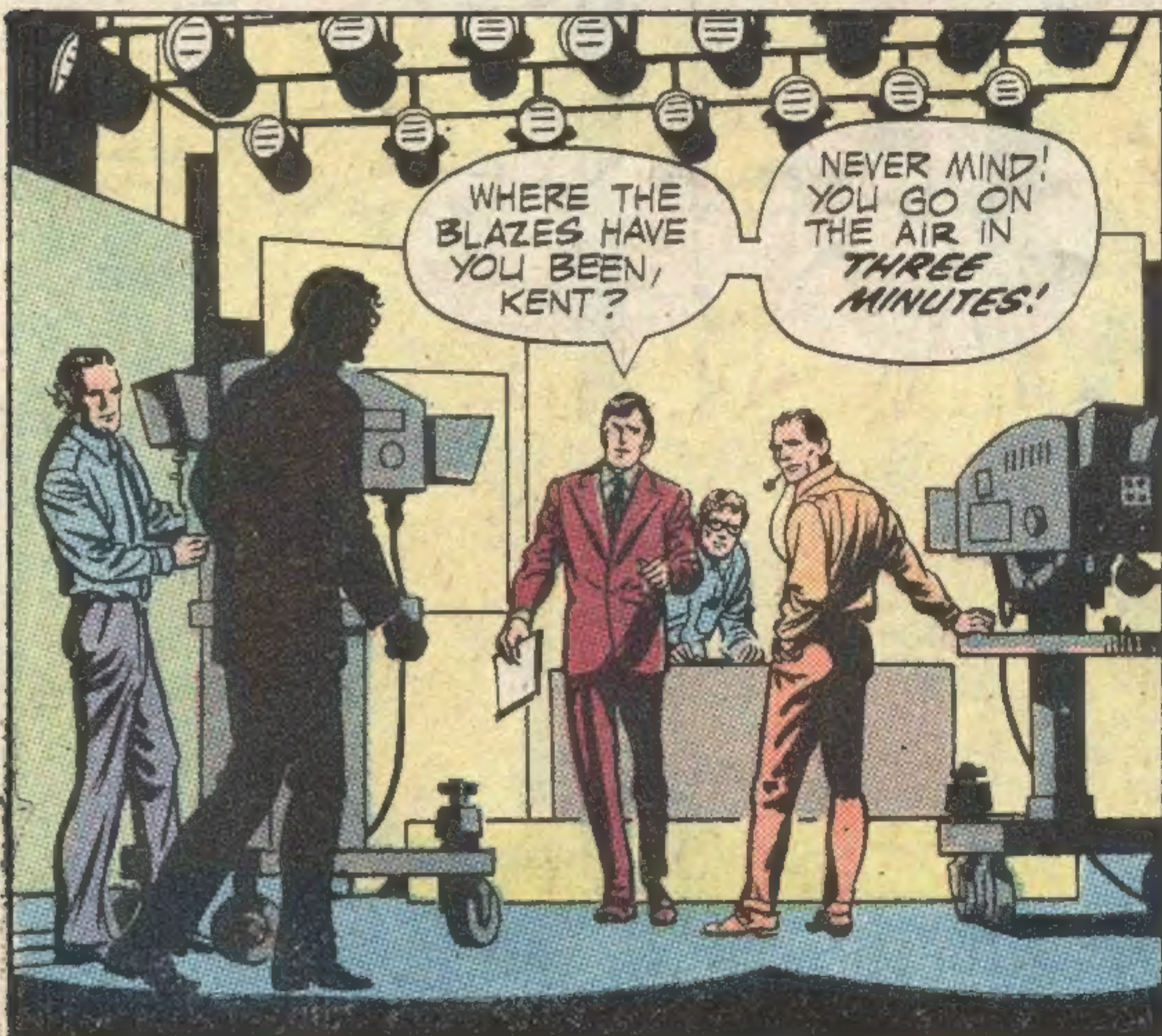
AND IN A DESERTED ALLEY BEHIND THE GALAXY BUILDING...

PEOPLE HAVE LOST FAITH IN ME! BUT WORSE, I'M LOSING FAITH IN MYSELF!

I NEED TIME TO THINK... GET AWAY FROM IT ALL IN MY OFFICE-- AS CLARK KENT!

KENT! MR. EDGE HAS BEEN YELLING HIMSELF PURPLE TRYING TO FIND YOU! HE WANTS YOU IN STUDIO B RIGHT AWAY!

JUST MY LUCK--!



WHERE THE BLAZES HAVE YOU BEEN, KENT?

NEVER MIND! YOU GO ON THE AIR IN THREE MINUTES!

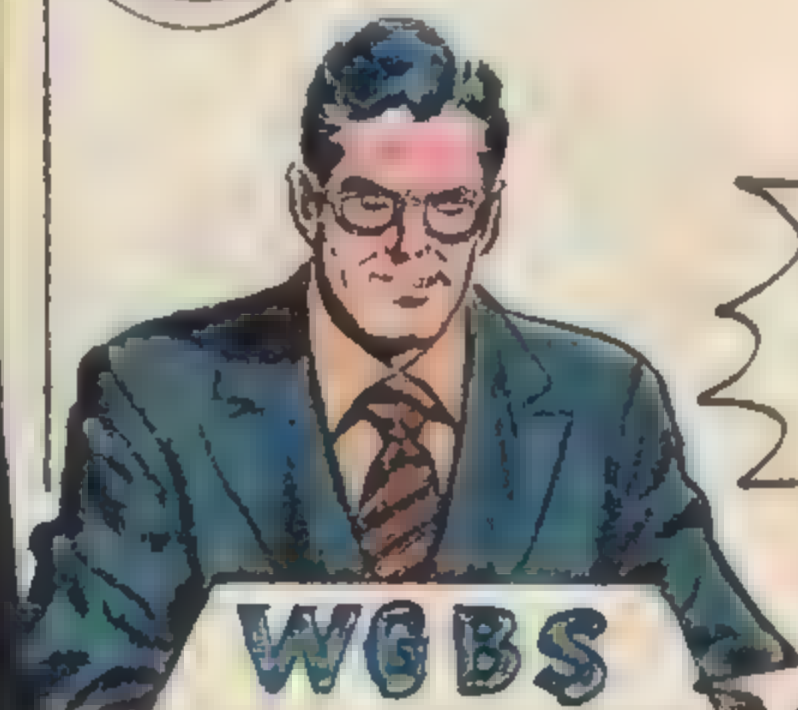
BUT MY REGULAR NEWSCAST ISN'T UNTIL--

NEVER MIND THAT! THIS IS A SPECIAL REPORT ON THE ASTRONAUT STORY! YOU WILL DO THE PROGRAM!

HERE--I WROTE THE COPY MYSELF!

MOMENTS LATER...

...AND SO THE HISTORIC **ARGO I** FLIGHT SEEMS DOOMED TO END IN TRAGEDY! THE NATIONAL AERONAUTICAL SPACE ADMINISTRATION INFORMS US CARTER HAS ONLY ENOUGH OXYGEN TO SURVIVE **FOUR MORE HOURS!**



MISSION CONTROL IN HOUSTON STILL WONDERS WHAT STOPPED THE **ARGO** SPACECRAFT EARLY LAST NIGHT ON ITS WAY BACK TO EARTH!

AND THE WORLD WONDERS WHY **SUPERMAN** DOESN'T DO HIS SWORN DUTY AND RESCUE AMERICA'S GALLANT SPACEMAN!

AS MILLIONS LOOK AND LISTEN TO CLARK, THERE ISN'T THE SLIGHTEST SUSPICION OF THE HIDDEN TORMENT HE HIMSELF SUFFERS FROM READING MORGAN EDGE'S SCATHING WORDS...

AND IS THIS WHAT WE CAN EXPECT OF EARTH'S CHAMPION IN THE FUTURE?

WILL HE ONLY COME TO OUR AID WHEN HE FEELS LIKE IT?

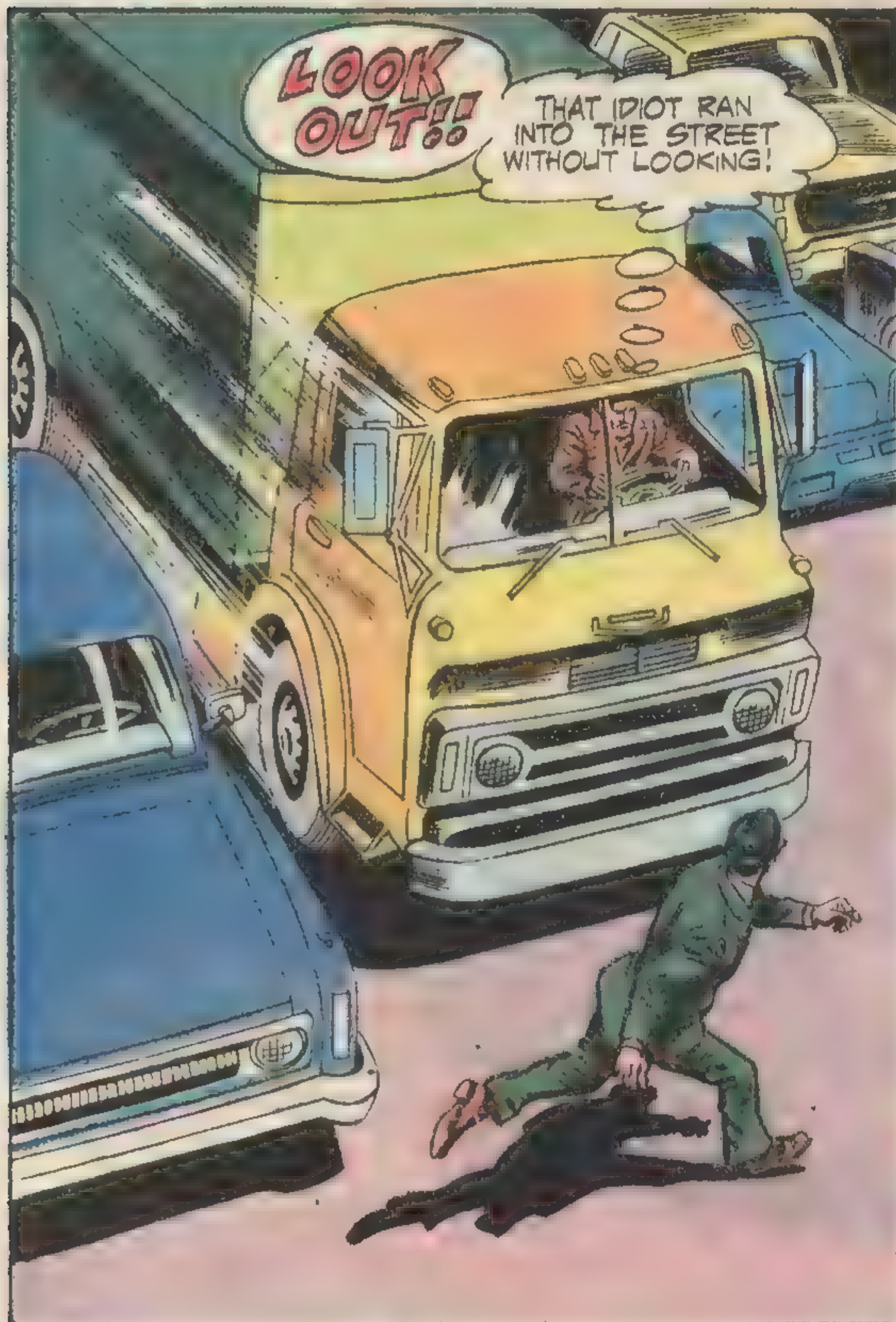
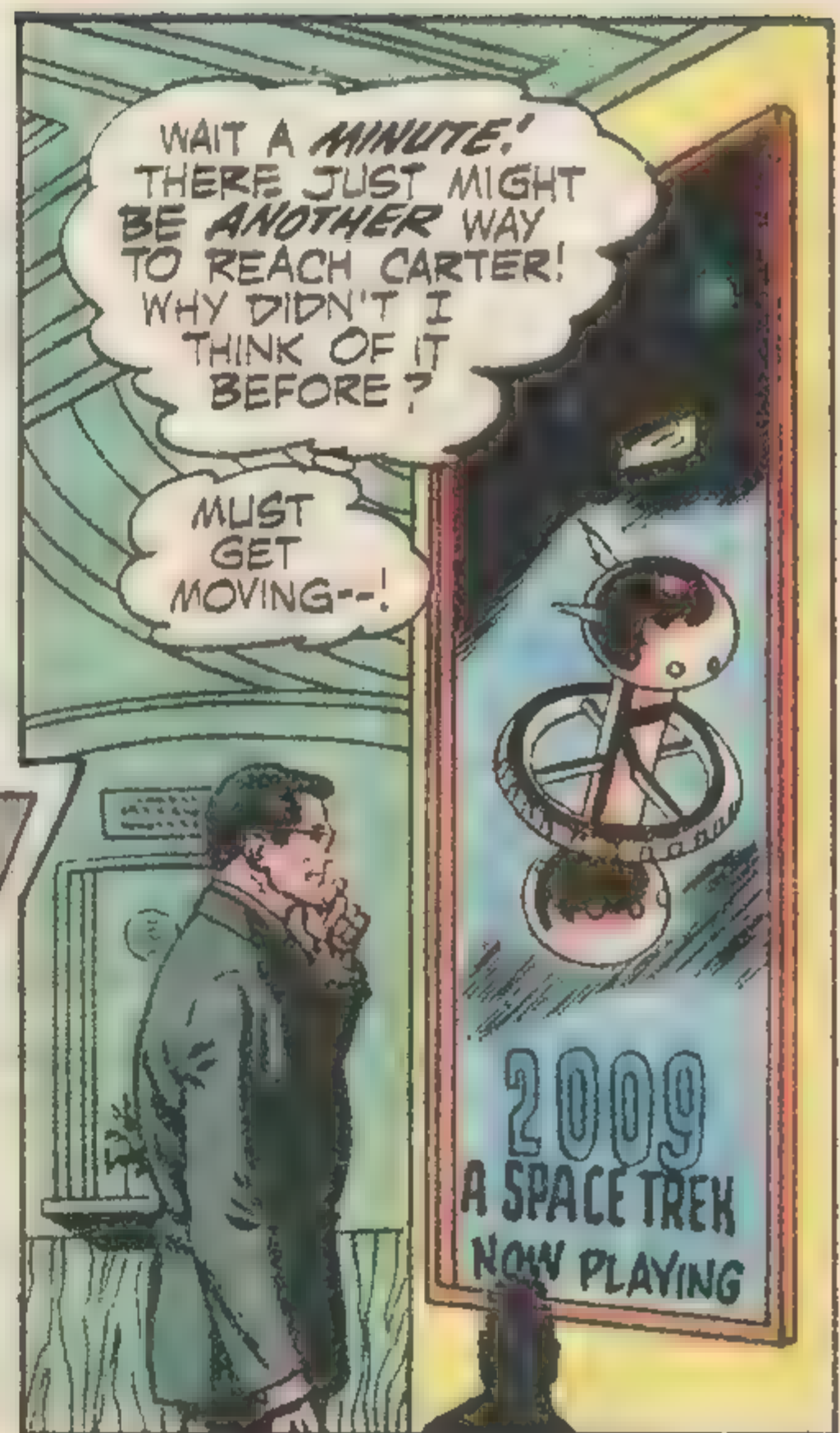
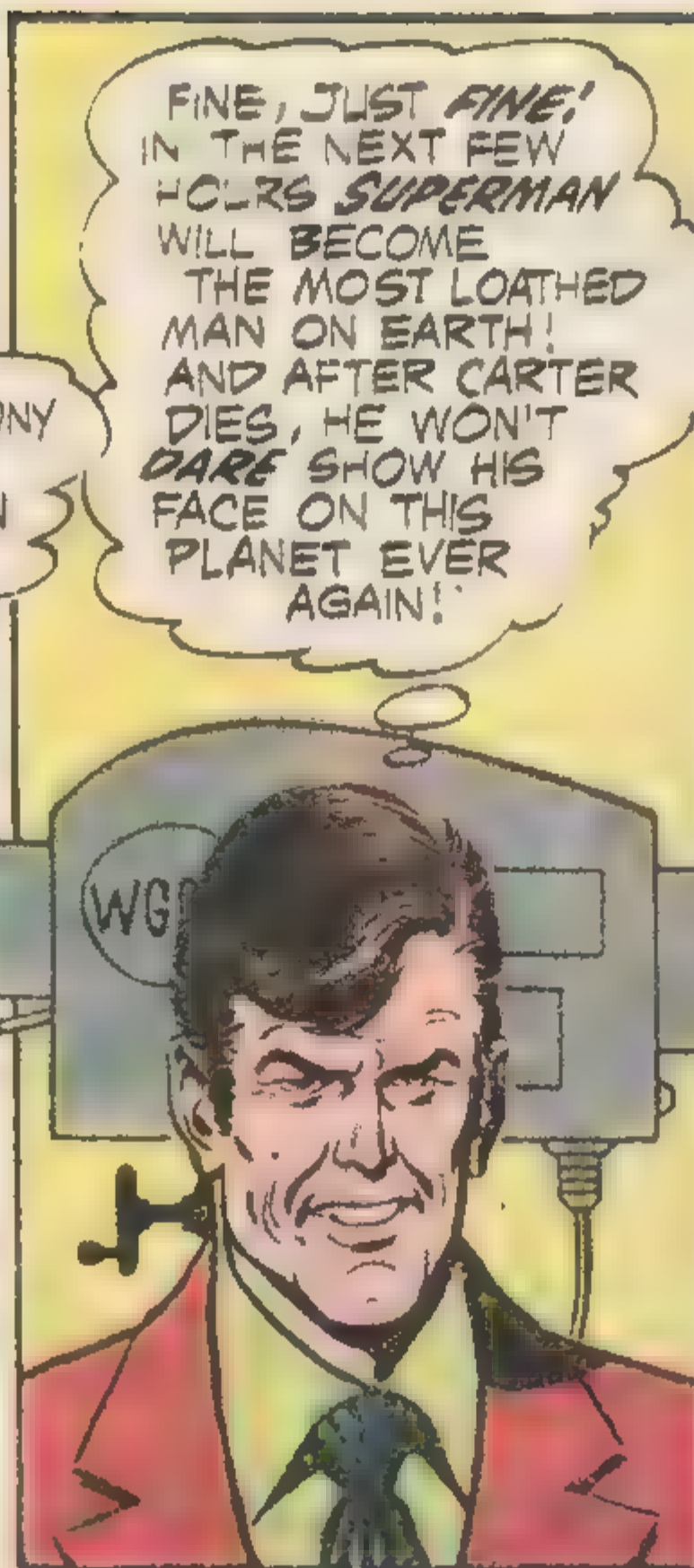
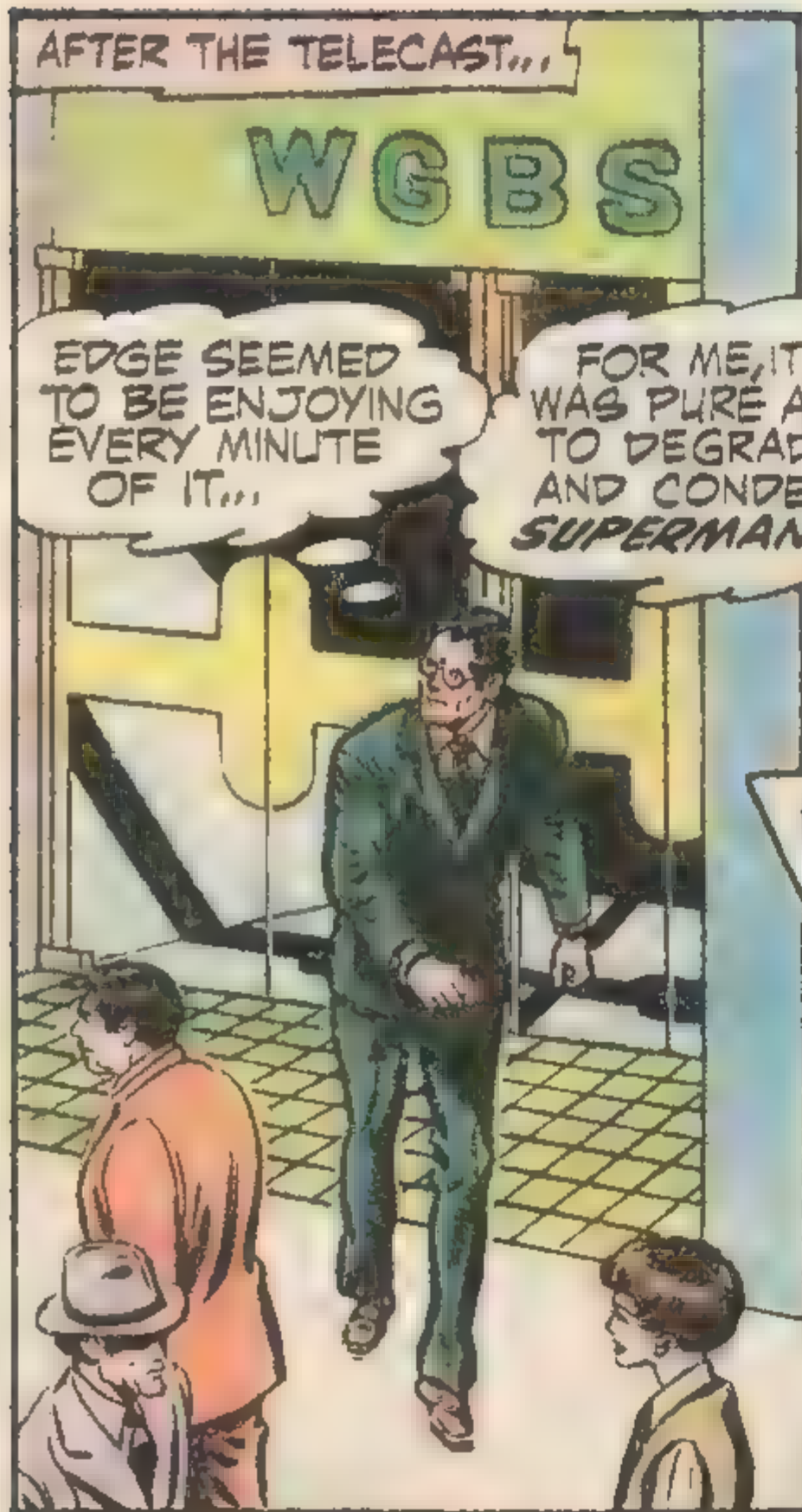
DOES **SUPERMAN** HAVE THE RIGHT TO DECIDE WHO WILL LIVE --AND DIE?

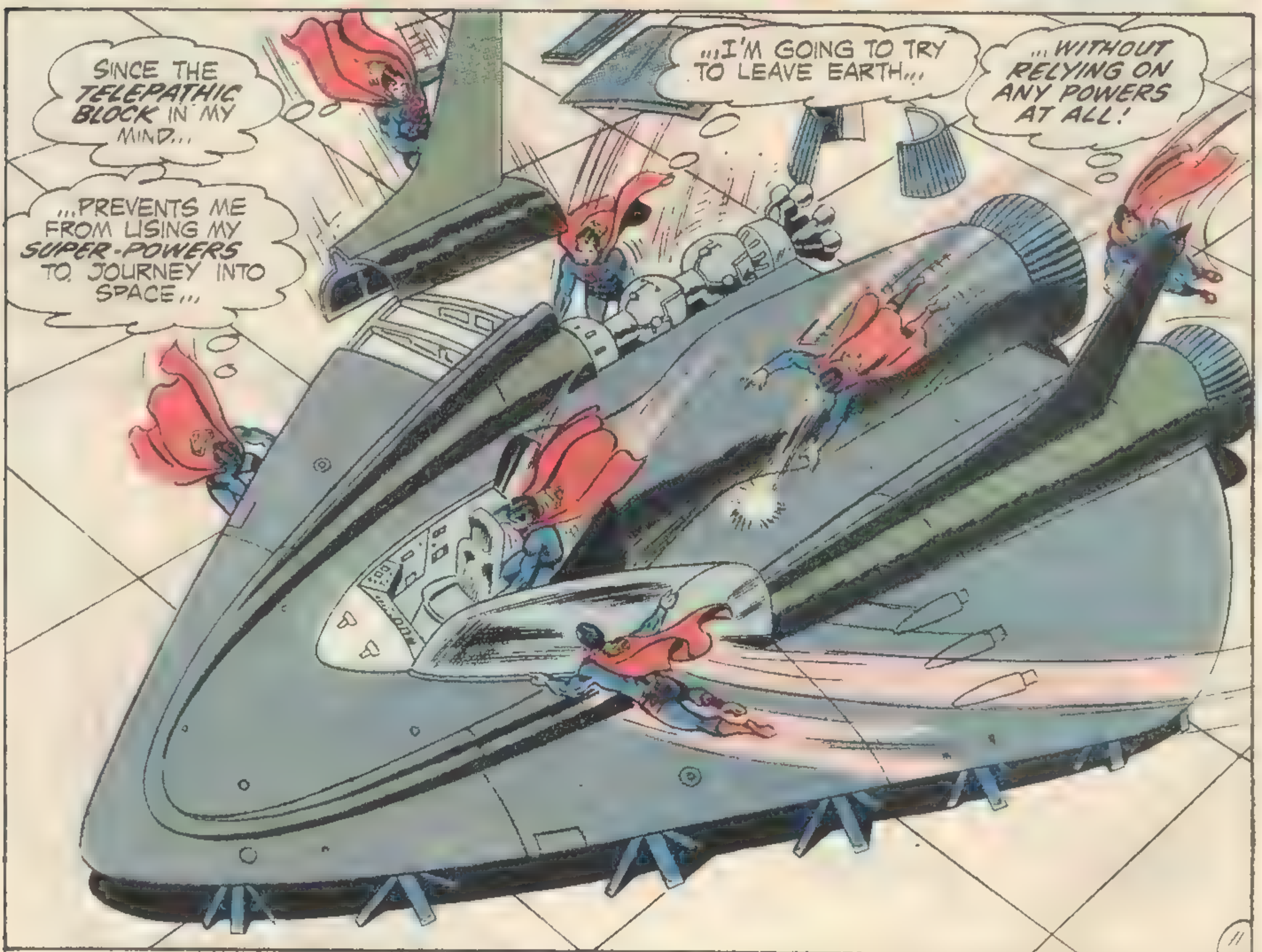
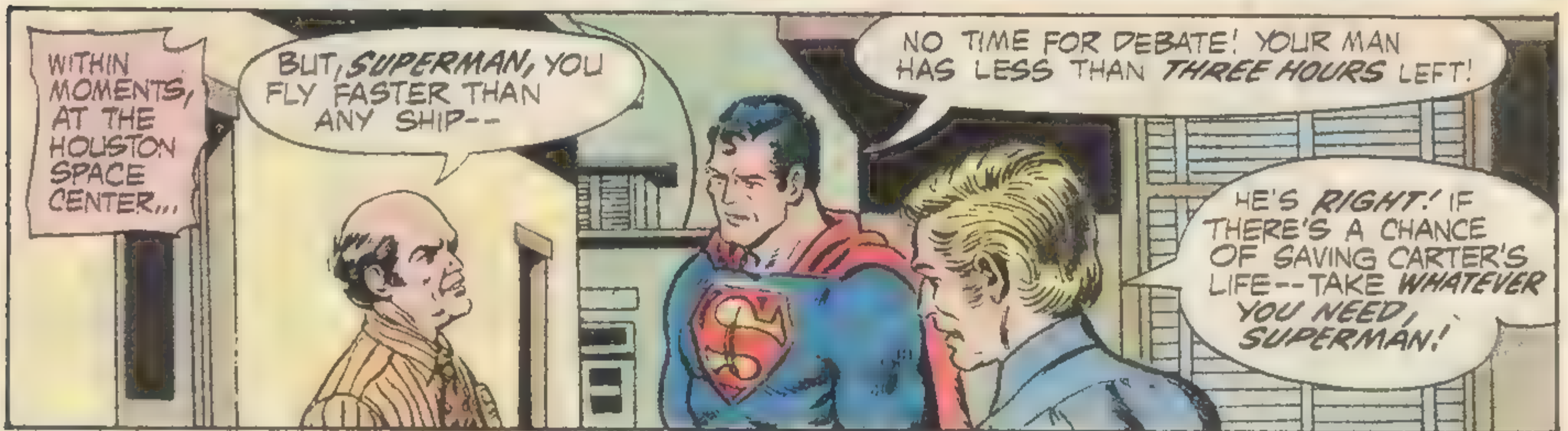
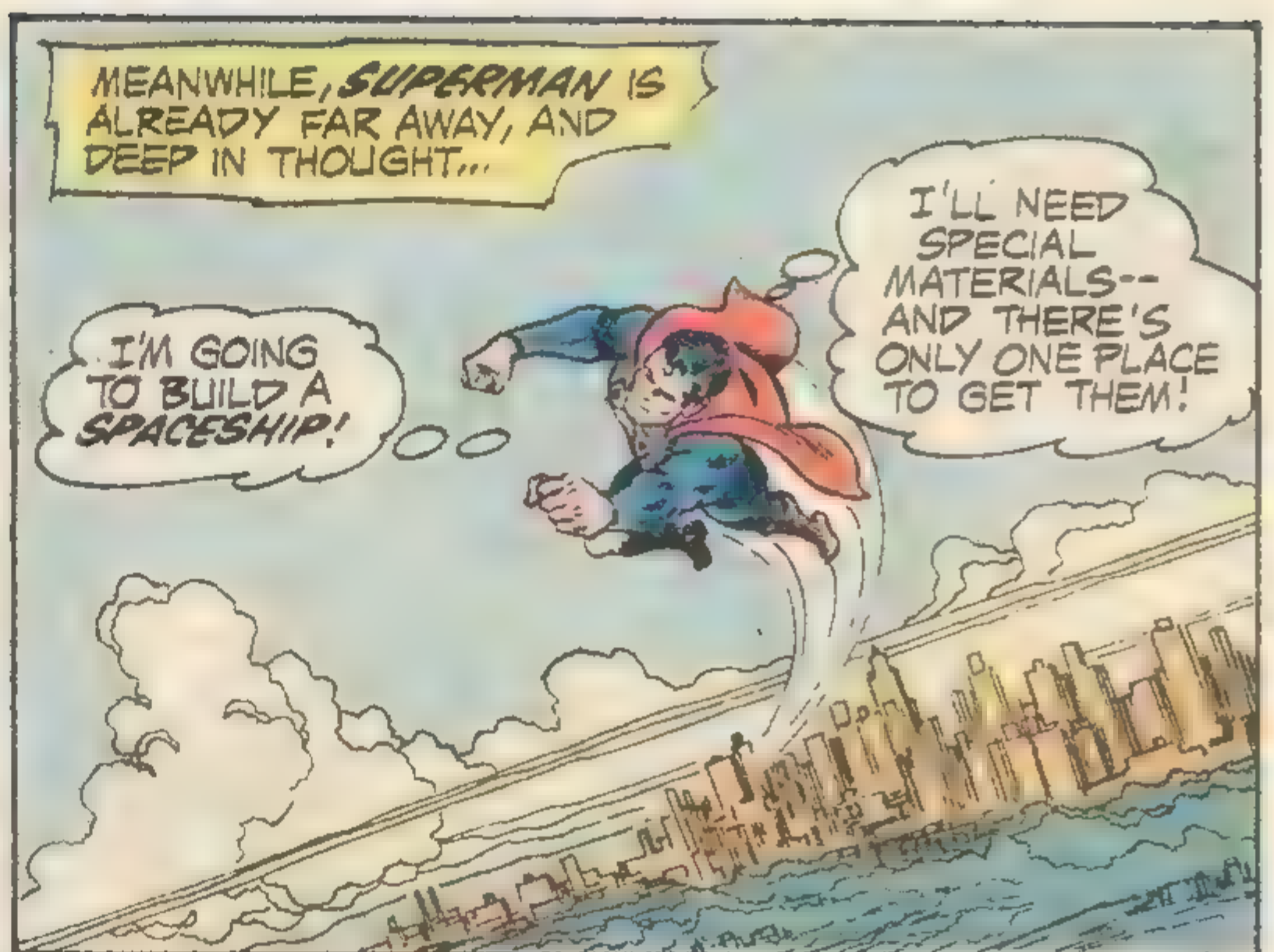
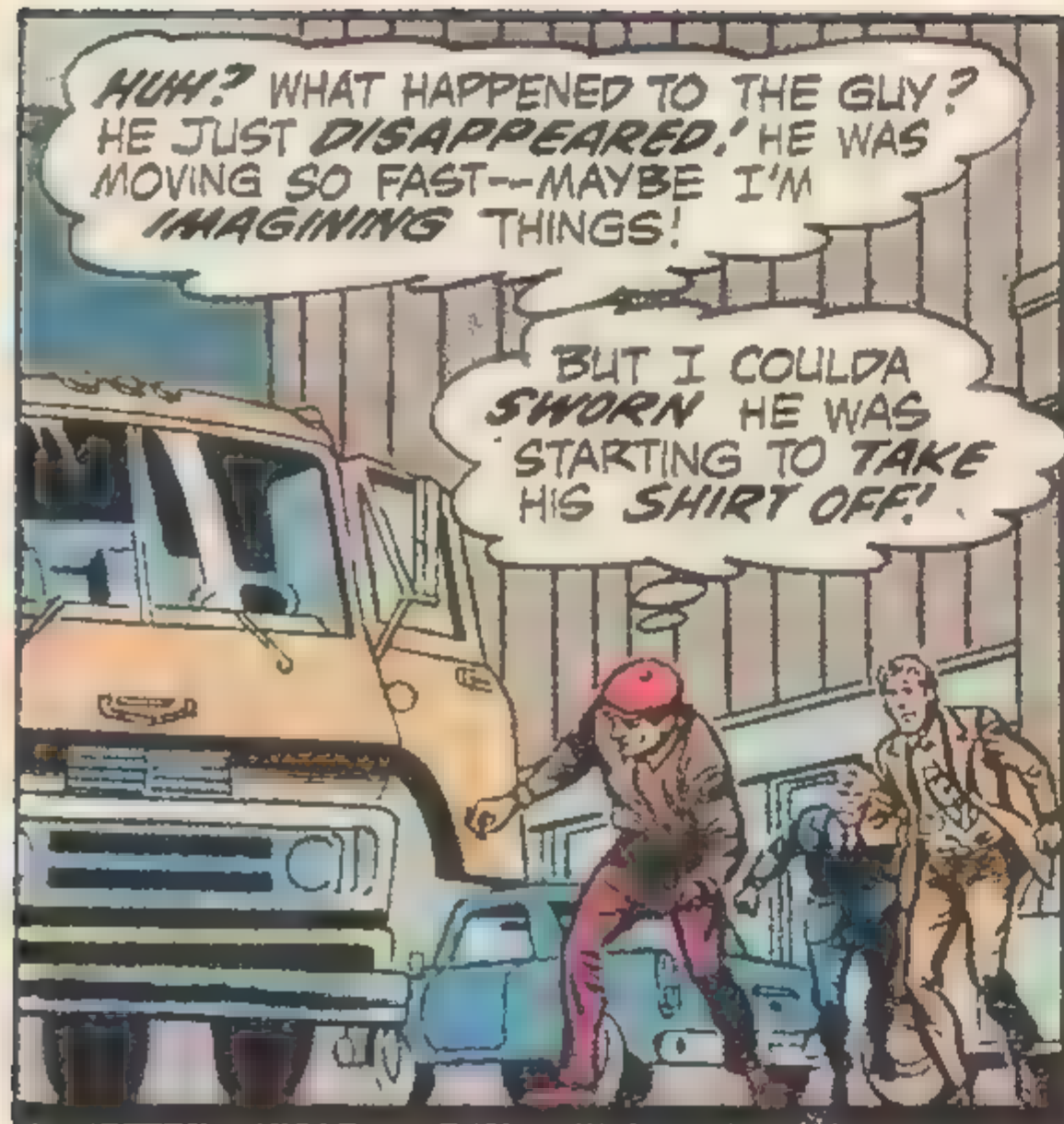
BUT NO ONE IS MORE DISTRESSED BY **SUPERMAN**'S UNPRECEDENTED BEHAVIOR THAN THE BEREAVED FAMILY OF COLONEL CARTER!

ALL THEY CAN DO IS HOPE AND PRAY THAT HE WILL CHANGE HIS MIND--AND SAVE HIM BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

WGBS



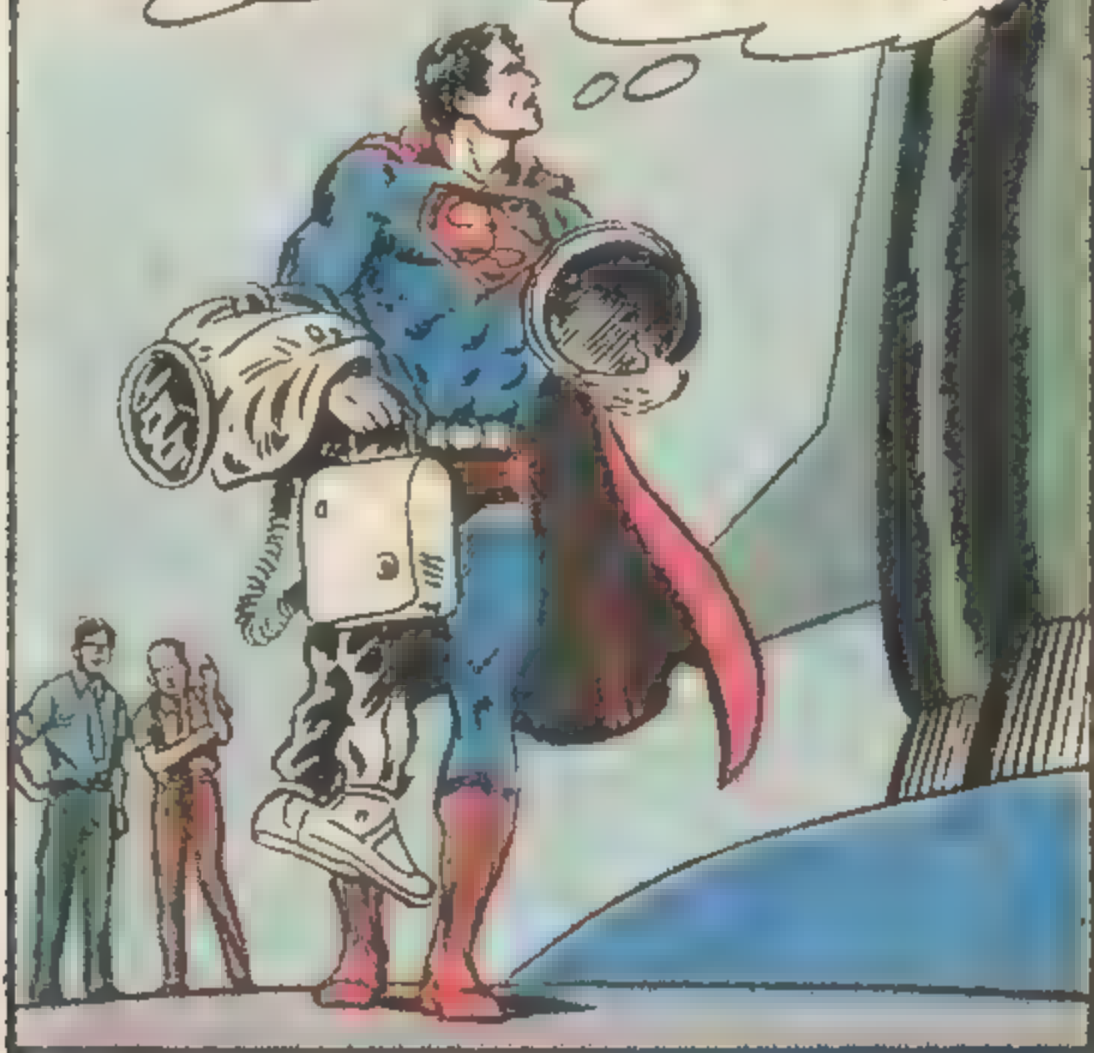




ONLY SCANT MOMENTS LATER...

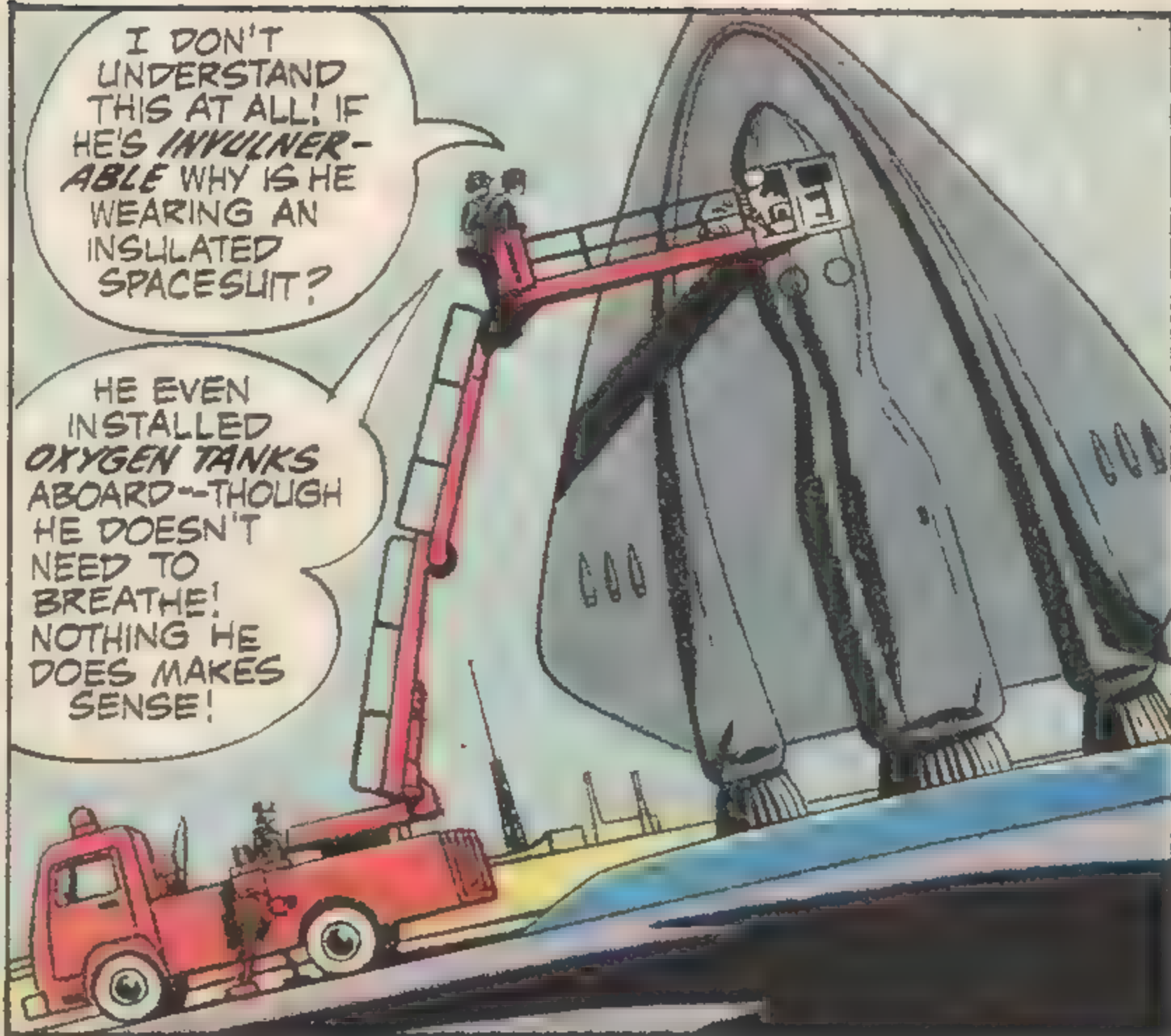
THE SHIP IS
READY FOR
TAKE-OFF!
ALL SYSTEMS
ARE **GO!**

TIME FOR ME TO
PUT ON THIS
SUIT--AND **NOT**
BE A
SUPERMAN
FOR ONCE!



I DON'T
UNDERSTAND
THIS AT ALL! IF
HE'S **INVULNER-**
ABLE WHY IS HE
WEARING AN
INSULATED
SPACESUIT?

HE EVEN
INSTALLED
OXYGEN TANKS
ABOARD--THOUGH
HE DOESN'T
NEED TO
BREATHE!
NOTHING HE
DOES MAKES
SENSE!



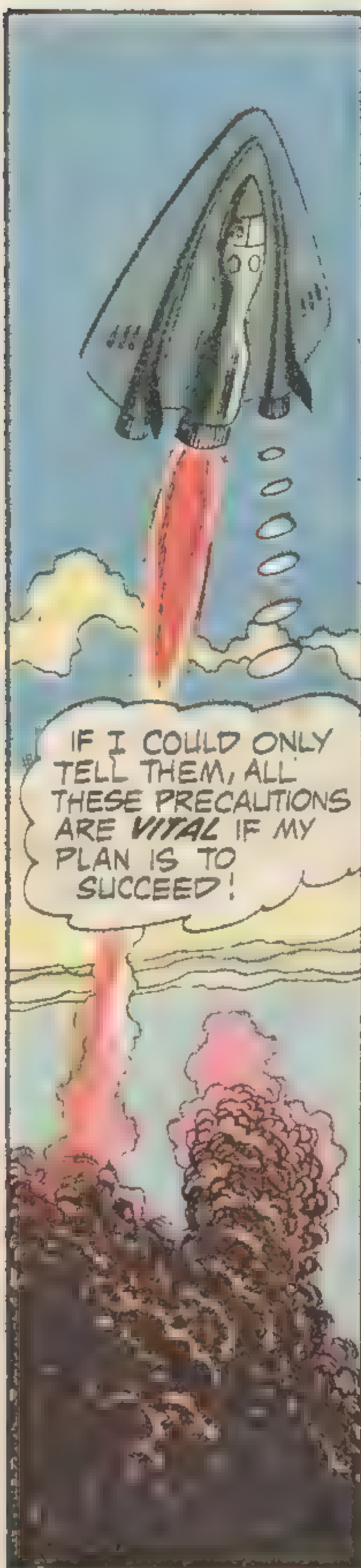
I KNOW A MENTAL
BLOCK HOLDS ME
BACK IF I TRY TO
LEAVE EARTH AS
SUPERMAN!

BUT NO SUPER-POWERS
ARE NEEDED TO PILOT
THIS SHIP! I'M MERELY
HANDLING THE CONTROLS
LIKE ANY ASTRONAUT
WOULD!

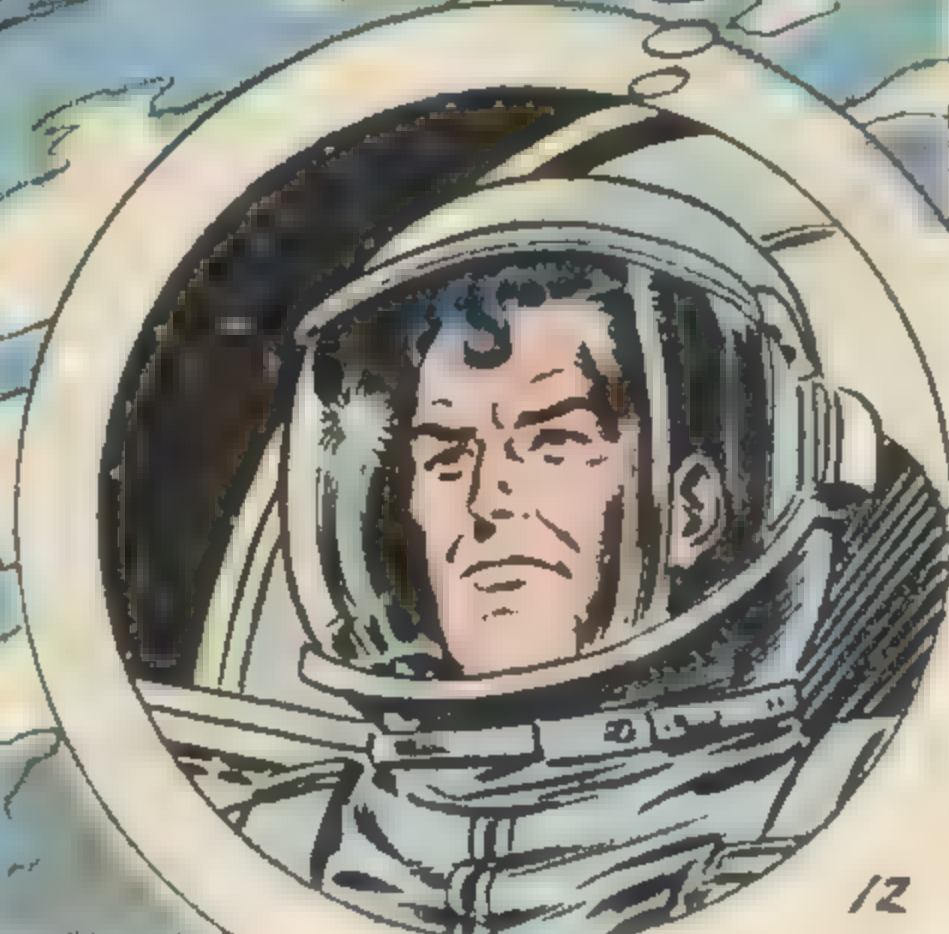
AT LAST, THE CRUCIAL MOMENT
COMES WHEN THE SLEEK CRAFT
BREAKS FREE OF THE EARTH
AND PENETRATES THE RIM OF
DEEP SPACE...

I'VE DONE IT!
NOW TO NAVIGATE
A DIRECT COURSE TO
ARGO I... AND GET
THERE WITHIN **TWO**
HOURS...

IF I COULD ONLY
TELL THEM, ALL
THESE PRECAUTIONS
ARE **VITAL** IF MY
PLAN IS TO
SUCCEED!



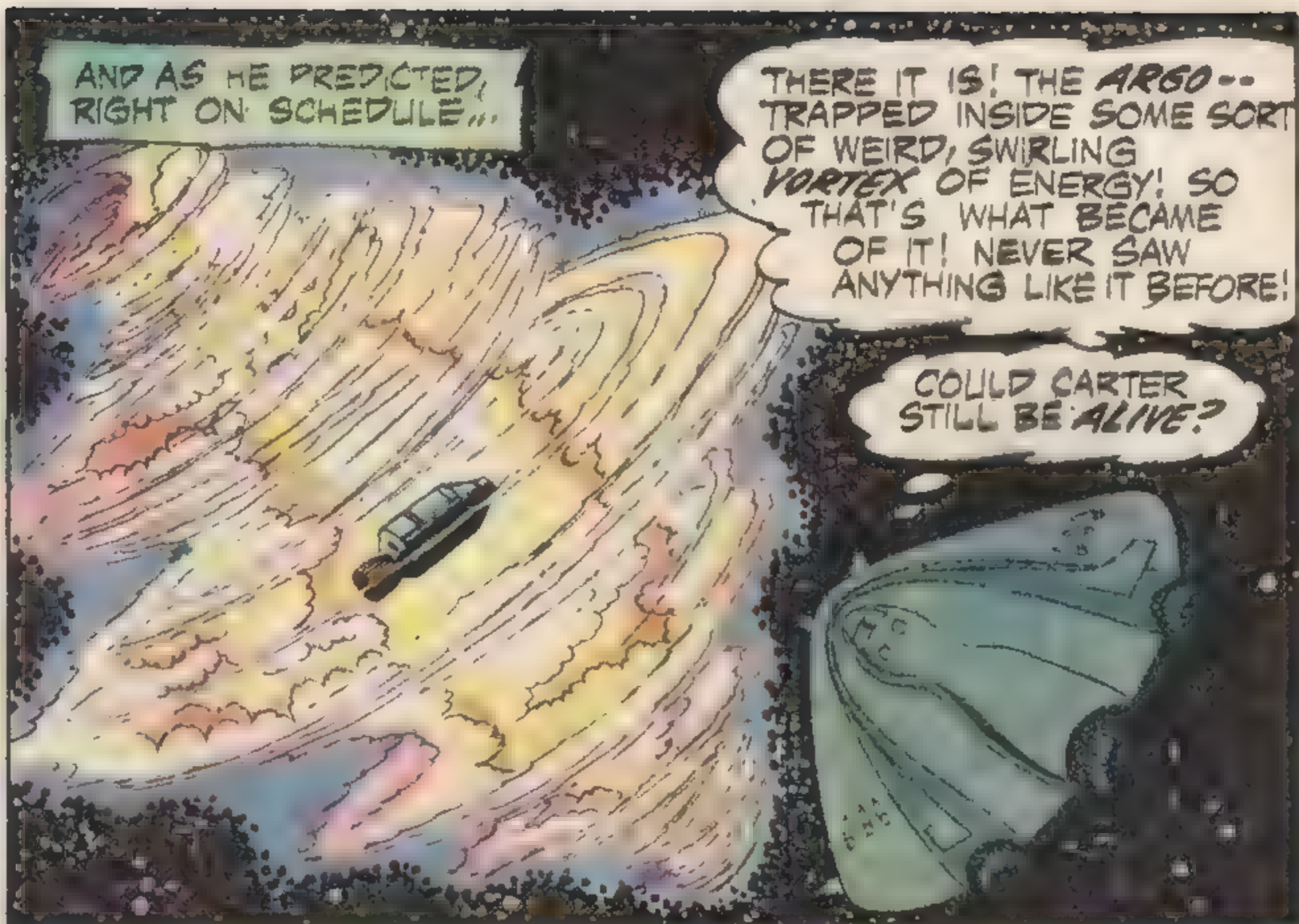
...ABOUT THE
SAME TIME
CARTER'S **OXYGEN**
IS DUE TO
RUN OUT!





BUT WHAT IS WAITING FOR ME OUT THERE? IS THERE SOME *UNKNOWN PERIL* BETWEEN EARTH AND THE MOON... THAT CAN EVEN ENDANGER A *SUPERMAN*?

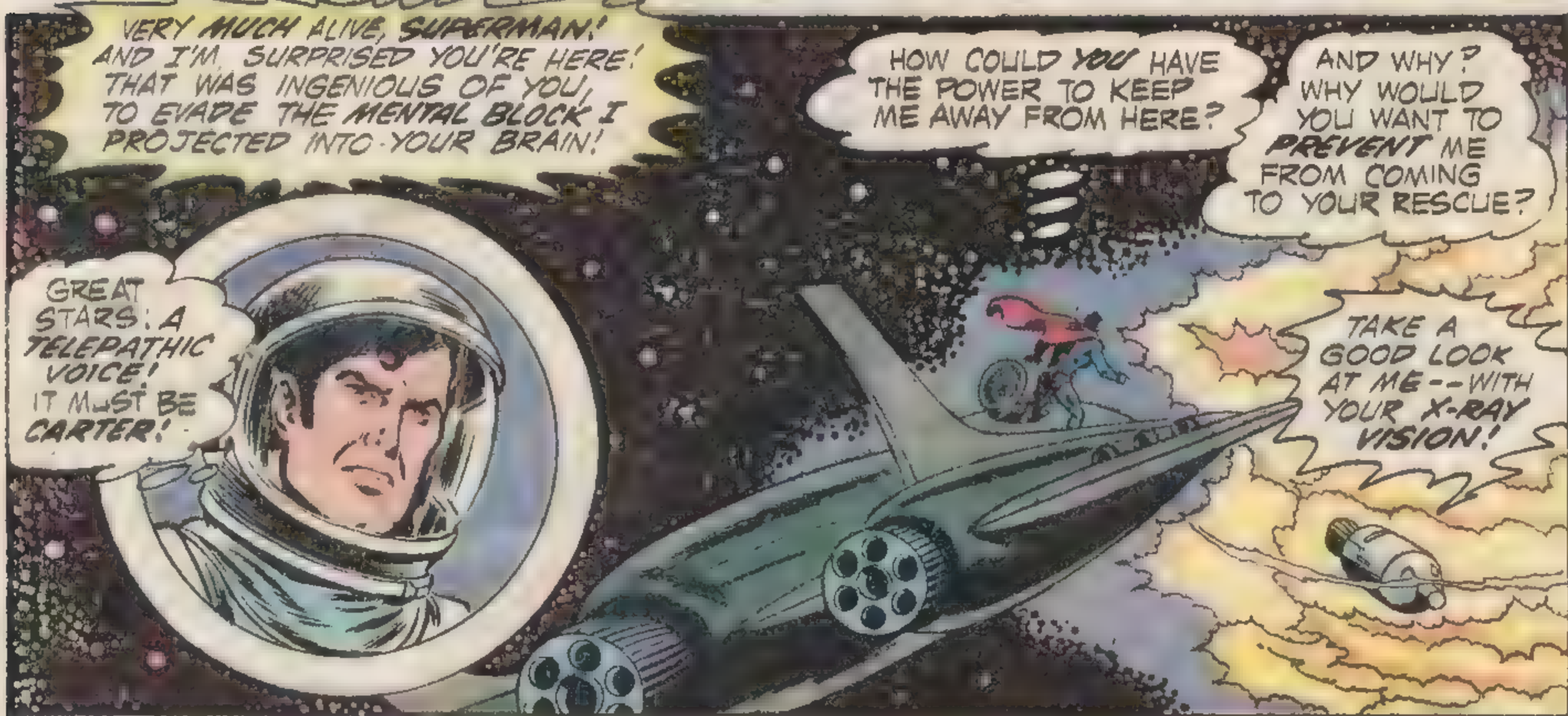
IT'S A RISK I MUST TAKE!



AND AS HE PREDICTED, RIGHT ON SCHEDULE...

THERE IT IS! THE *ARGO*-- TRAPPED INSIDE SOME SORT OF WEIRD, SWIRLING *VORTEX* OF ENERGY! SO THAT'S WHAT BECAME OF IT! NEVER SAW ANYTHING LIKE IT BEFORE!

COULD CARTER STILL BE *ALIVE*?



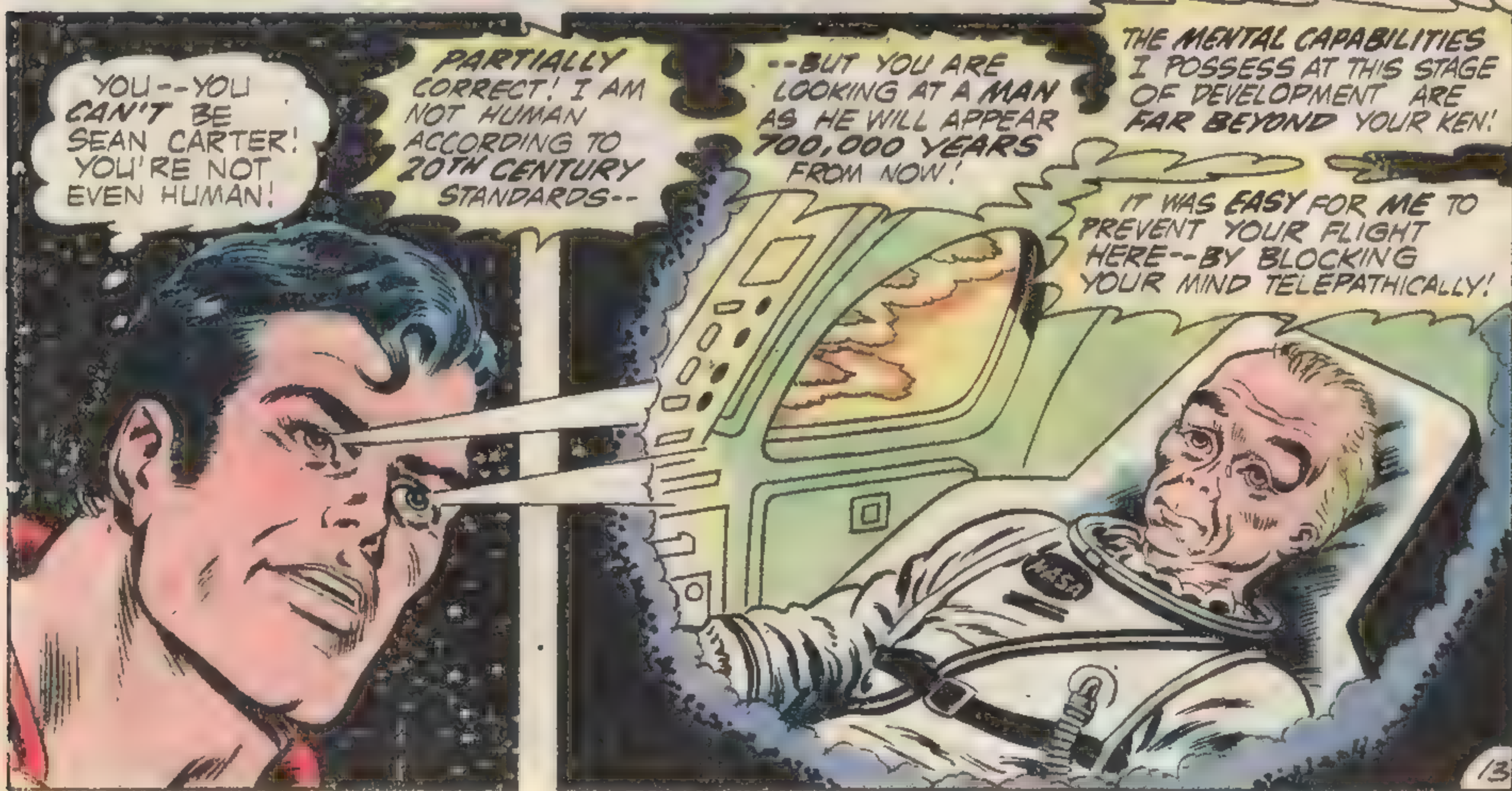
VERY MUCH *ALIVE, SUPERMAN!* AND I'M SURPRISED YOU'RE HERE! THAT WAS *INGENIOUS* OF YOU, TO EVADE THE *MENTAL BLOCK* I PROJECTED INTO YOUR BRAIN!

HOW COULD YOU HAVE THE POWER TO KEEP ME AWAY FROM HERE?

AND WHY? WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO *PREVENT* ME FROM COMING TO YOUR RESCUE?

GREAT STARS! A *TELEPATHIC VOICE!* IT MUST BE *CARTER!*

TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT ME--WITH YOUR *X-RAY VISION!*



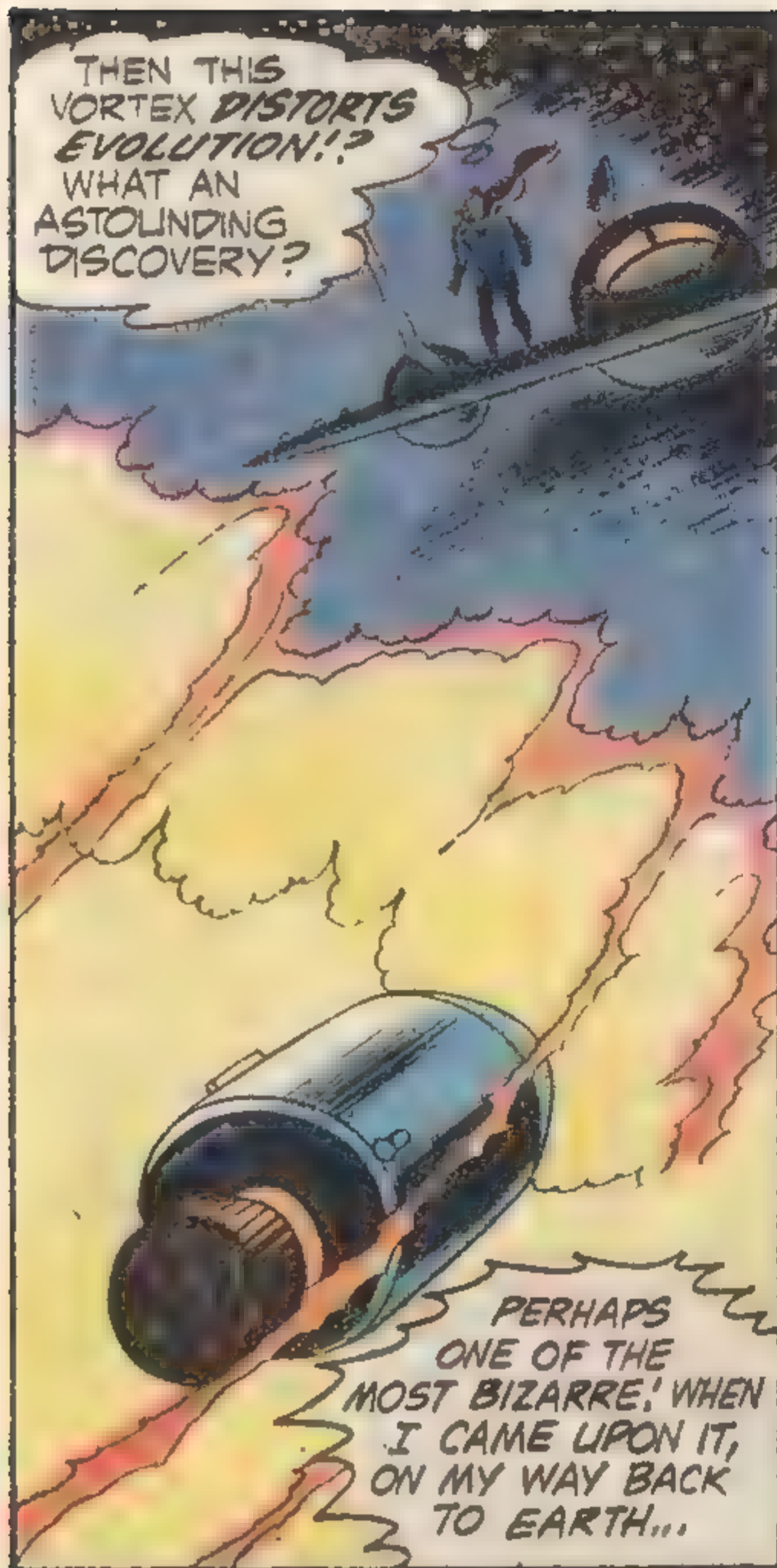
YOU--YOU CAN'T BE SEAN CARTER! YOU'RE NOT EVEN HUMAN!

PARTIALLY CORRECT! I AM NOT HUMAN ACCORDING TO 20TH CENTURY STANDARDS--

--BUT YOU ARE LOOKING AT A MAN AS HE WILL APPEAR 700,000 YEARS FROM NOW!

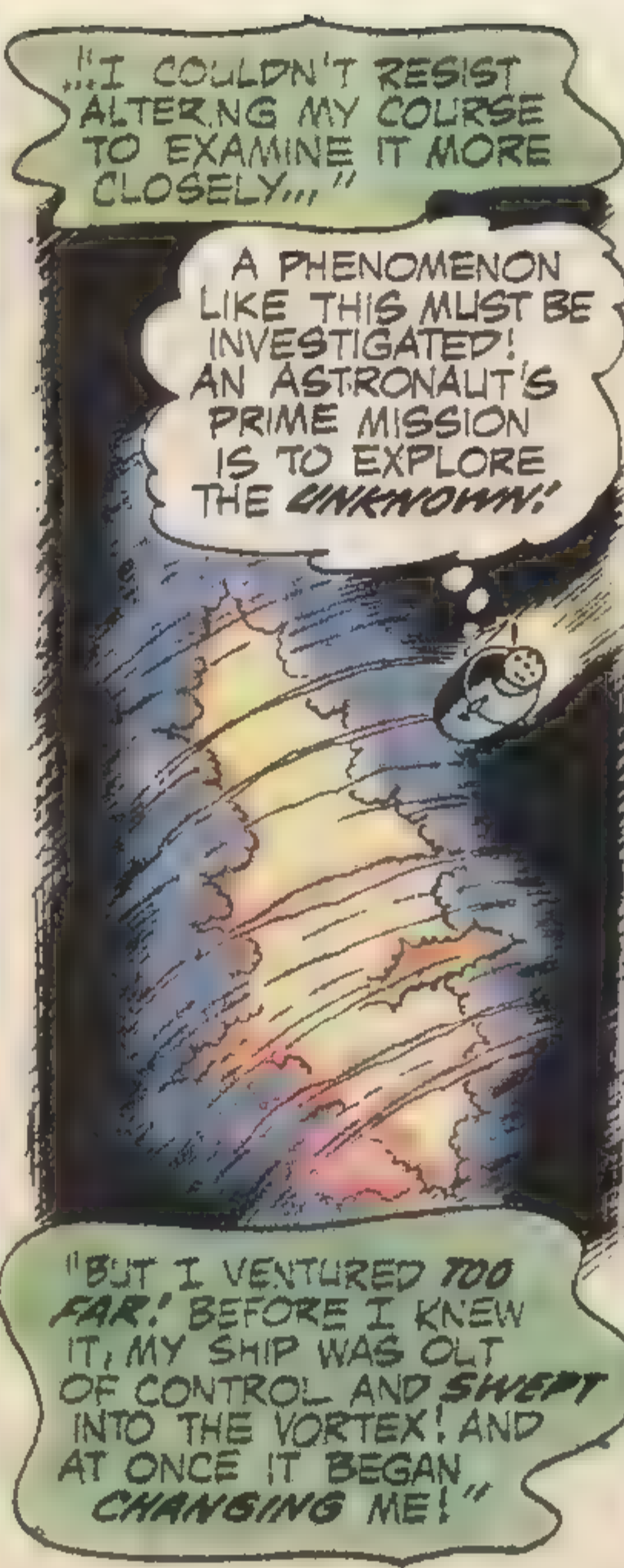
THE *MENTAL CAPABILITIES* I POSSESS AT THIS STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT ARE FAR BEYOND YOUR KEN!

IT WAS EASY FOR ME TO PREVENT YOUR FLIGHT HERE--BY BLOCKING YOUR MIND *TELEPATHICALLY!*



THEN THIS
VORTEX *DISTORTS*
EVOLUTION!?!
WHAT AN
ASTOUNDING
DISCOVERY?

PERHAPS
ONE OF THE
MOST BIZARRE! WHEN
I CAME UPON IT,
ON MY WAY BACK
TO EARTH...



"I COULDN'T RESIST
ALTERING MY COURSE
TO EXAMINE IT MORE
CLOSELY..."

A PHENOMENON
LIKE THIS MUST BE
INVESTIGATED!
AN ASTRONAUT'S
PRIME MISSION
IS TO EXPLORE
THE *UNKNOWN!*

"BUT I VENTURED *TOO*
FAR! BEFORE I KNEW
IT, MY SHIP WAS OUT
OF CONTROL AND *SWEPT*
INTO THE VORTEX! AND
AT ONCE IT BEGAN
CHANGING ME!"



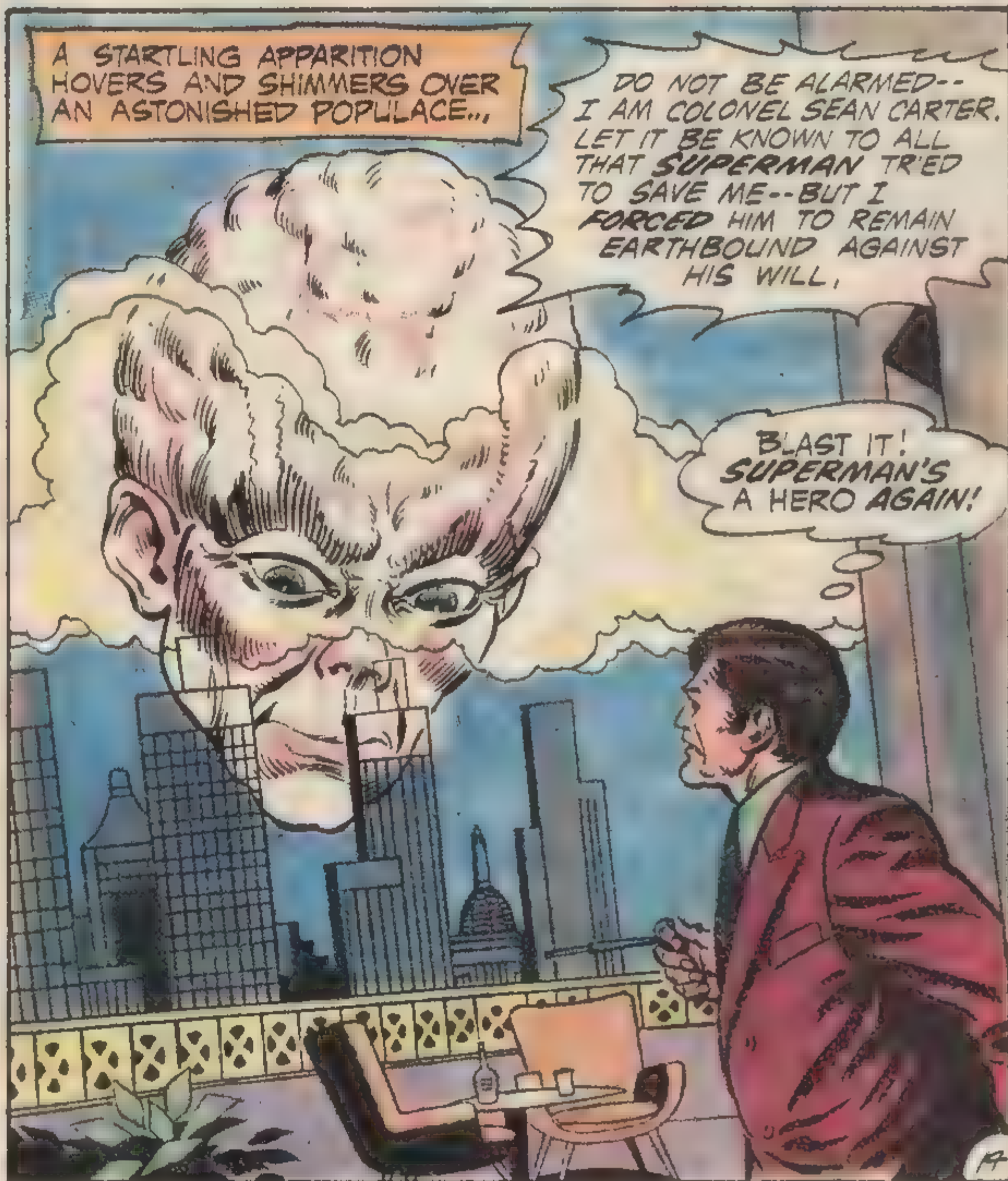
EVEN NOW--THIS
SWIRLING MAELSTROM
OF ENERGY IS EVOLVING
ME *STILL FURTHER!*
EVERY SECOND LEAVES
ME MORE *ADVANCED!*

THAT'S WHY I DON'T
WANT YOU TO RESCUE
ME, *SUPERMAN!*
ONCE I HAD A TASTE OF
SUPERIOR MENTALITY--
I CRAVED MORE! TO
SEE *HOW FAR* I
COULD ACCELERATE MY
EVOLUTION!



I AM SORRY FOR
THE TROUBLE I
CAUSED YOU!

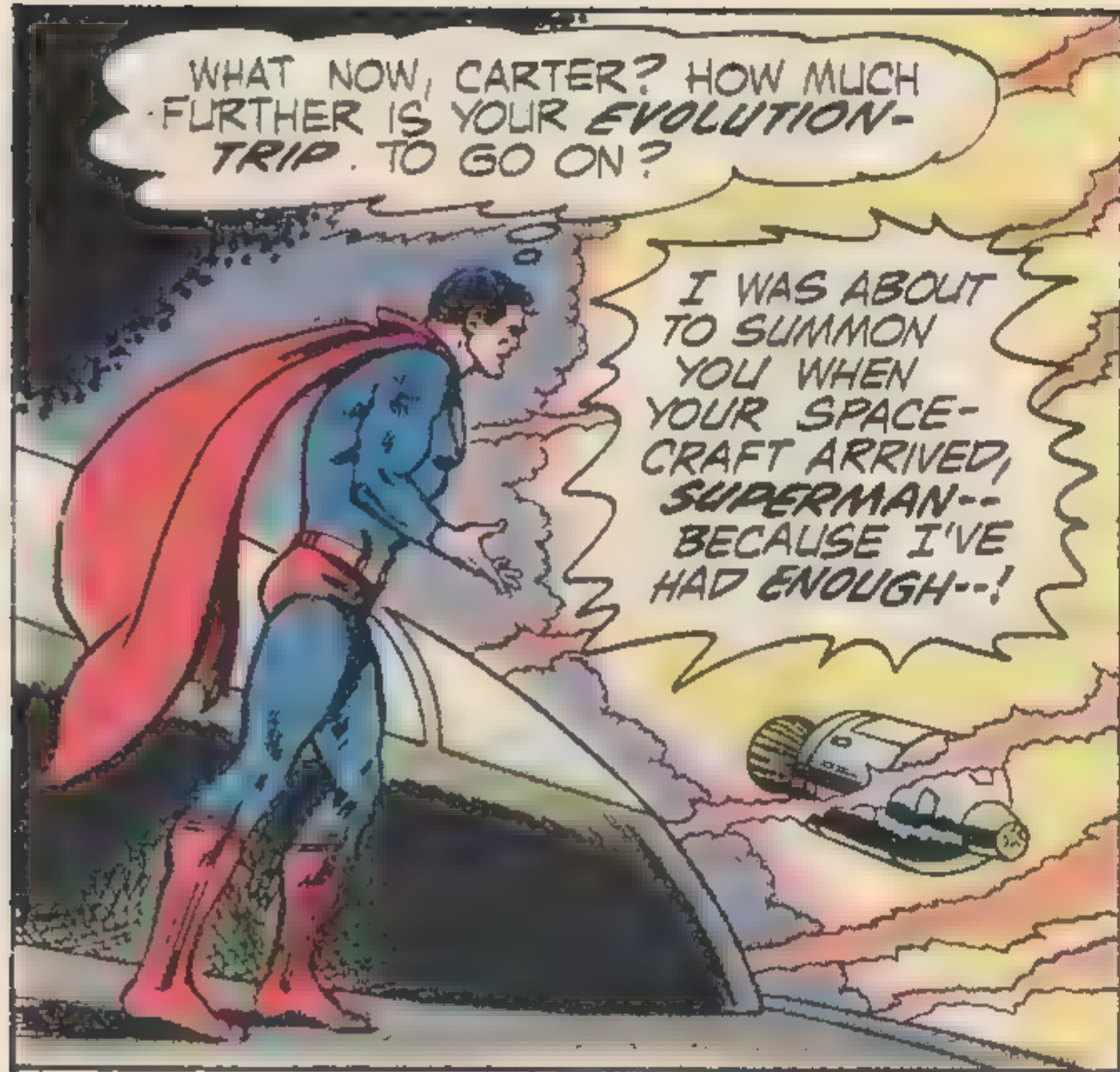
MY MIND IS NOW
CAPABLE OF EVEN *MORE*
ASTOUNDING FEATS!
AT THIS VERY MOMENT,
I AM CLEARING YOUR
GOOD NAME AND
REPUTATION ON EARTH!



A STARTLING APPARITION
HOVERS AND SHIMMERS OVER
AN ASTONISHED POPULACE...

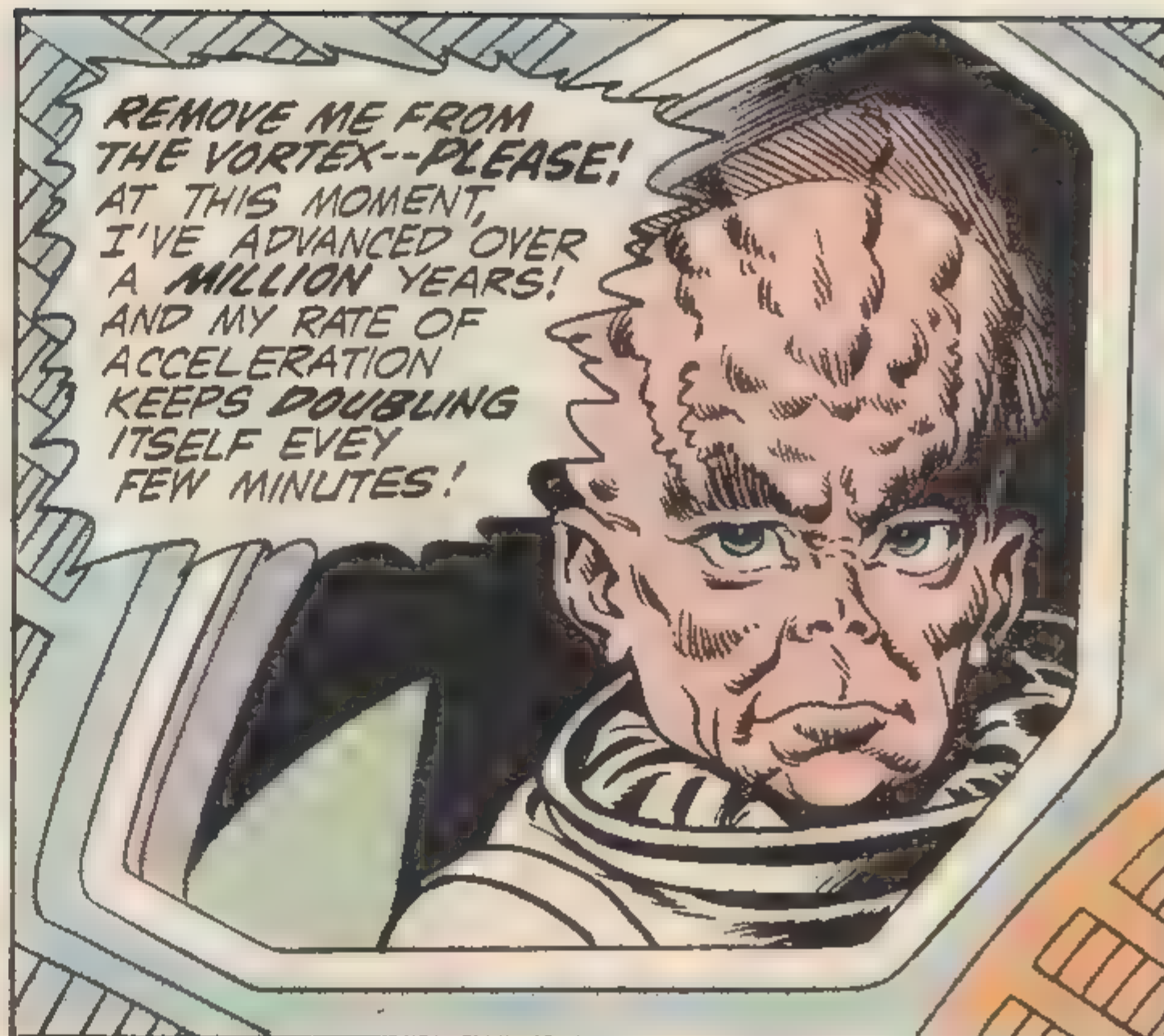
DO NOT BE ALARMED--
I AM COLONEL SEAN CARTER.
LET IT BE KNOWN TO ALL
THAT *SUPERMAN* TRIED
TO SAVE ME--BUT I
FORCED HIM TO REMAIN
EARTHBOUND AGAINST
HIS WILL.

BLAST IT!
SUPERMAN'S
A HERO AGAIN!

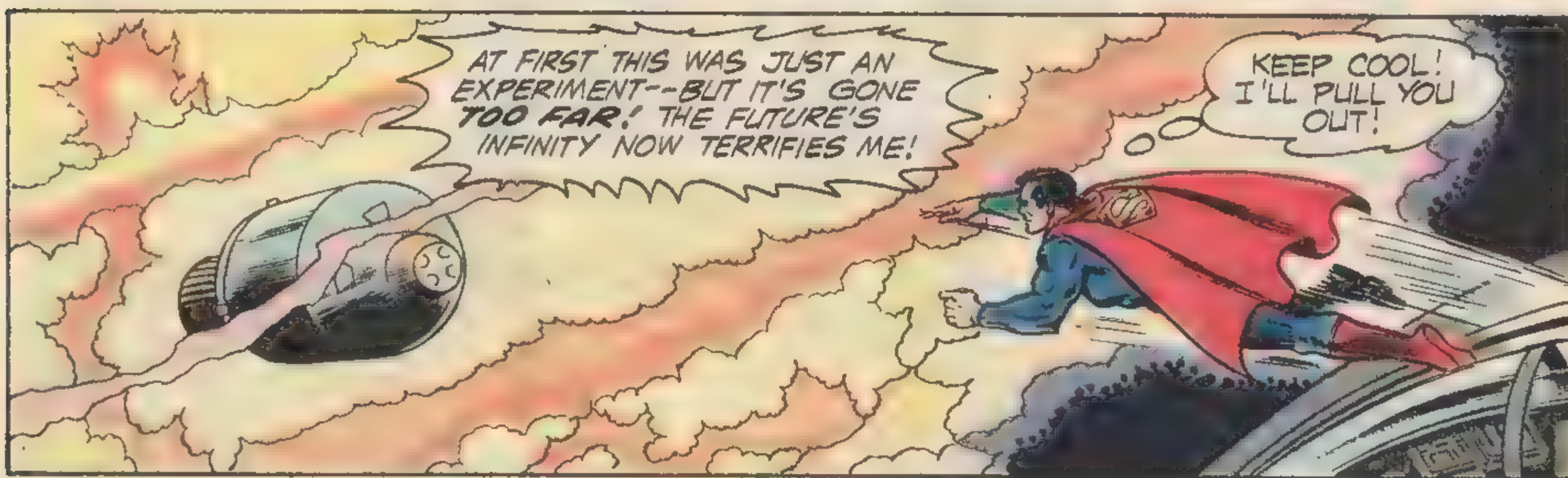


WHAT NOW, CARTER? HOW MUCH FURTHER IS YOUR **EVOLUTION-TRIP** TO GO ON?

I WAS ABOUT TO SUMMON YOU WHEN YOUR SPACE-CRAFT ARRIVED, **SUPERMAN**-- BECAUSE I'VE HAD ENOUGH--!



REMOVE ME FROM THE **VORTEX**--PLEASE! AT THIS MOMENT, I'VE ADVANCED OVER A **MILLION YEARS**! AND MY RATE OF ACCELERATION KEEPS **DOUBLING** ITSELF EVERY FEW MINUTES!



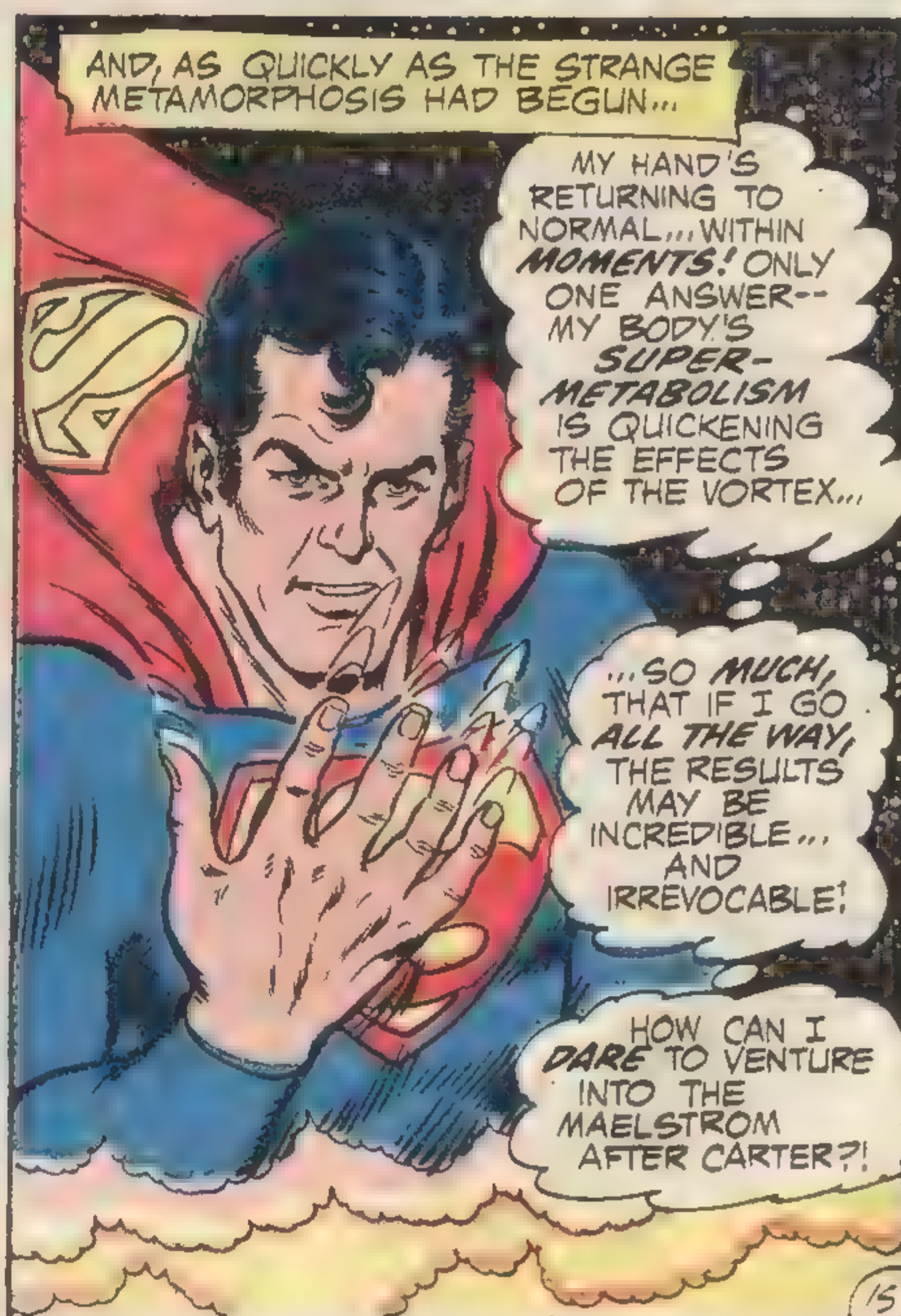
AT FIRST THIS WAS JUST AN EXPERIMENT--BUT IT'S GONE **TOO FAR**! THE FUTURE'S INFINITY NOW TERRIFIES ME!

KEEP COOL! I'LL PULL YOU OUT!



GREAT KRYPTON! I BARELY THRUST MY HAND INTO THE SWIRLING ENERGY--

AND LOOK WHAT HAPPENED TO IT!

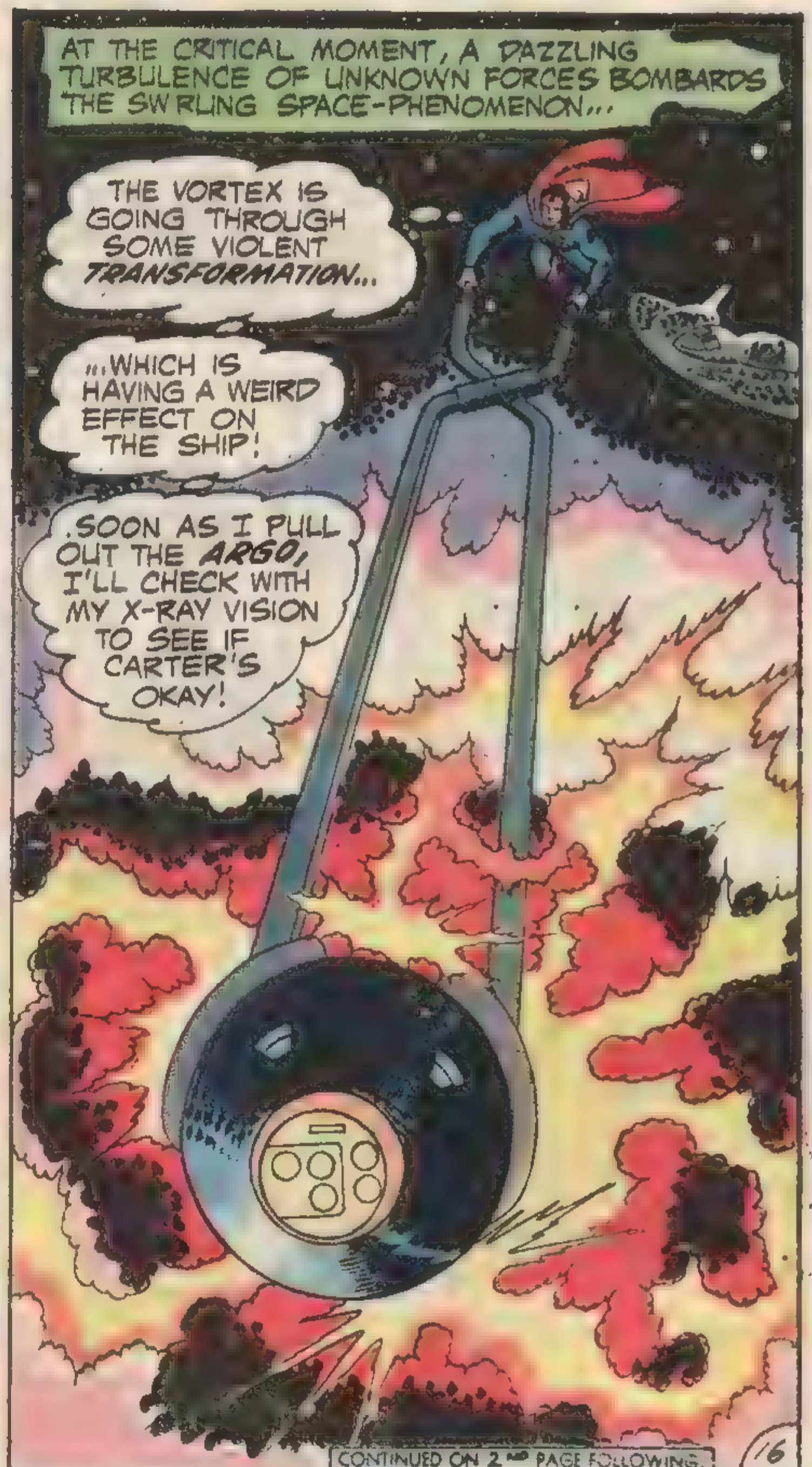
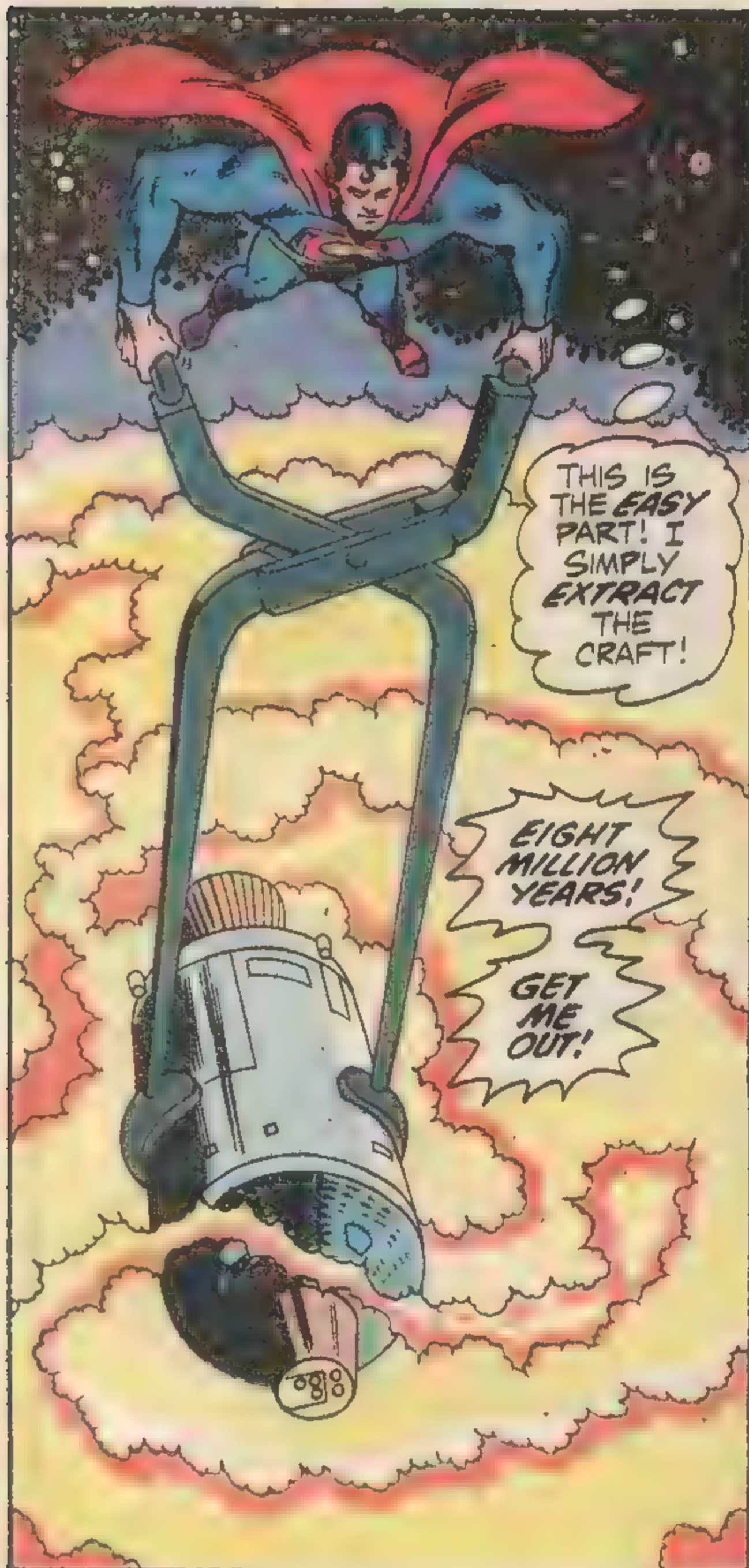
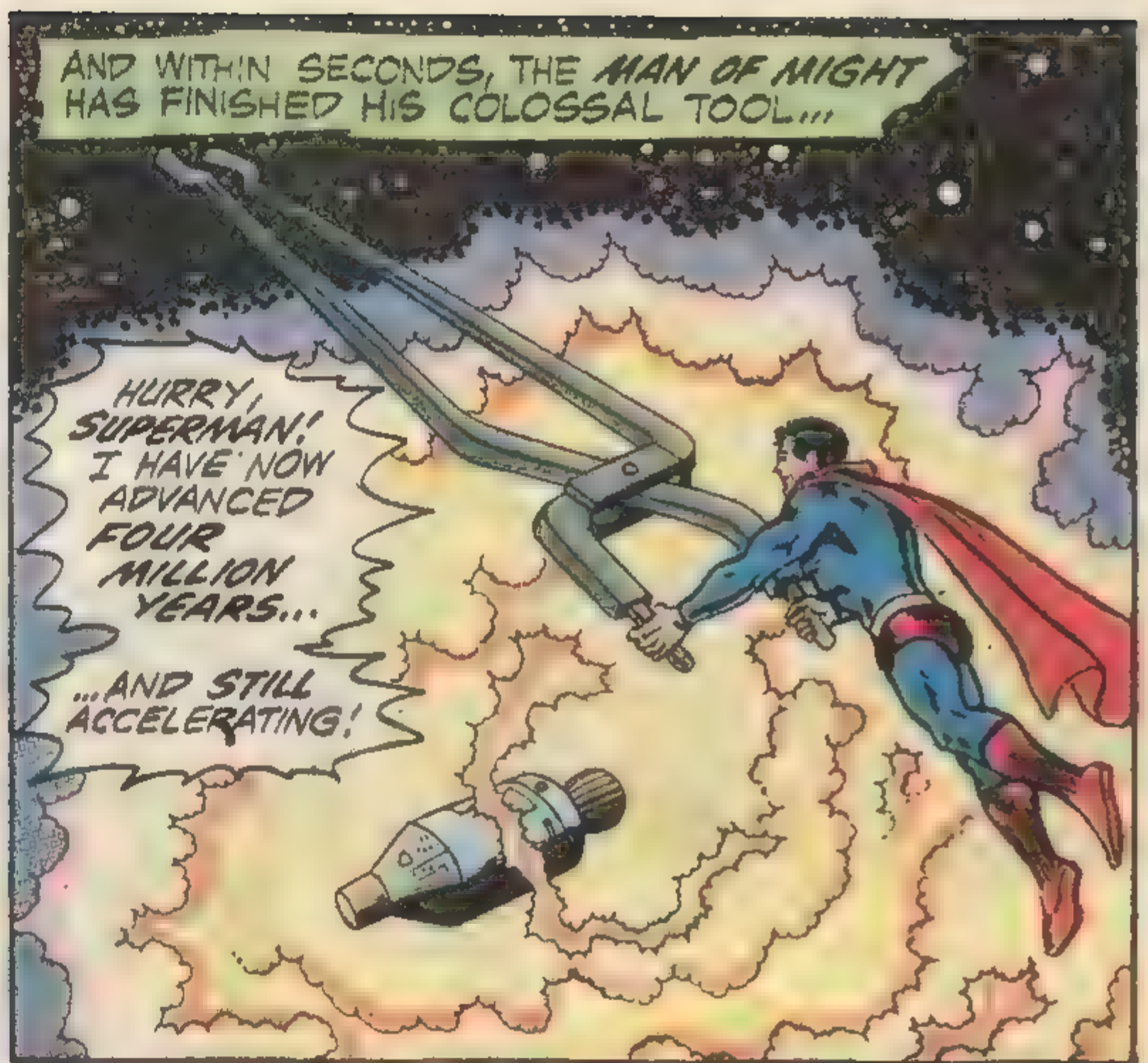
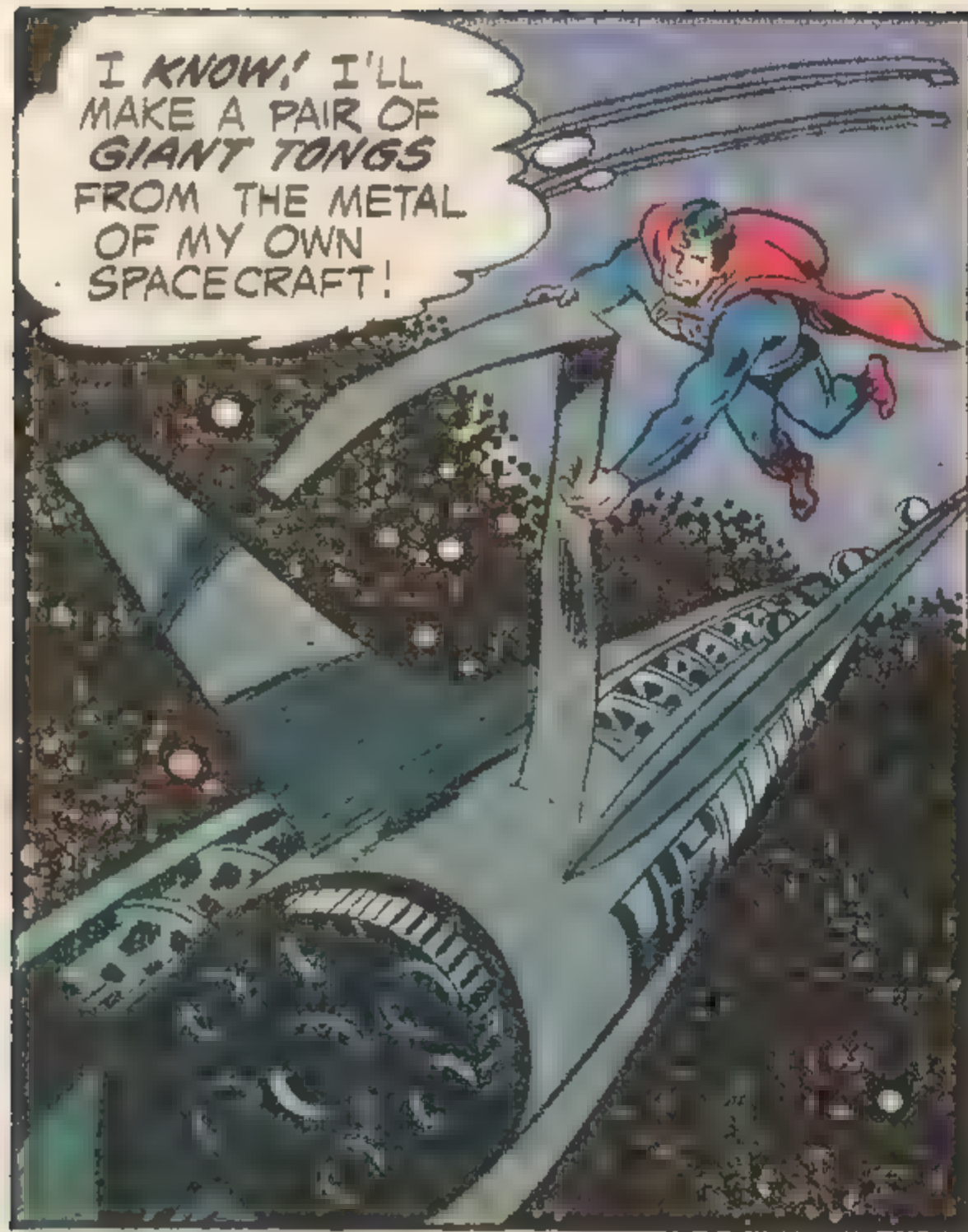


AND, AS QUICKLY AS THE STRANGE METAMORPHOSIS HAD BEGUN...

MY HAND'S RETURNING TO NORMAL... WITHIN **MOMENTS**! ONLY ONE ANSWER-- MY BODY'S **SUPER-METABOLISM** IS QUICKENING THE EFFECTS OF THE VORTEX...

...SO MUCH, THAT IF I GO **ALL THE WAY**, THE RESULTS MAY BE INCREDIBLE... AND IRREVOCABLE!

HOW CAN I **DARE** TO VENTURE INTO THE MAELSTROM AFTER CARTER?!



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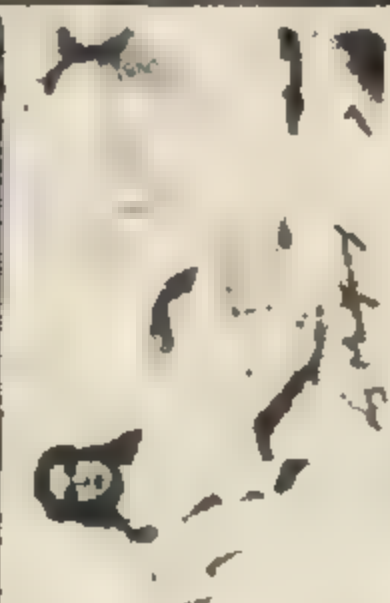
LOVE
STORY
47 -



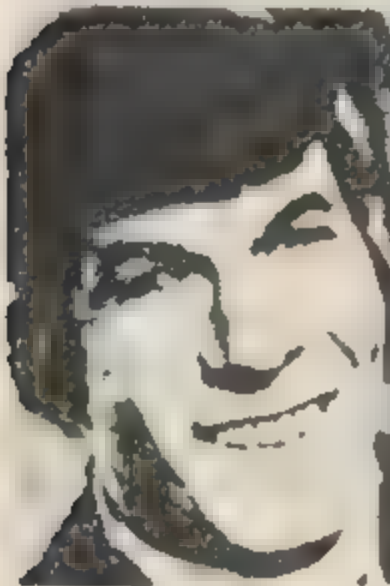
LEE
MAJORS
52 - Shilo



JAYNE
MANSFIELD
53 - Pinup



LIZ
MONTGOMERY
59 - Pinup



LEONARD
NIMOY
64 - Paris



ELVIS
PRESLEY
67 - Bust



ELVIS
PRESLEY
68 - Full



ROBERT
REDFORD
69 -



BURT
REYNOLDS
70 -



WILLIAM
SHATNER
73 - Bust



NANCY
SINATRA
79 - Pinup



ELKE
SOMMER
81 - Pinup



SUNDANCE
KID
82 - Portrait



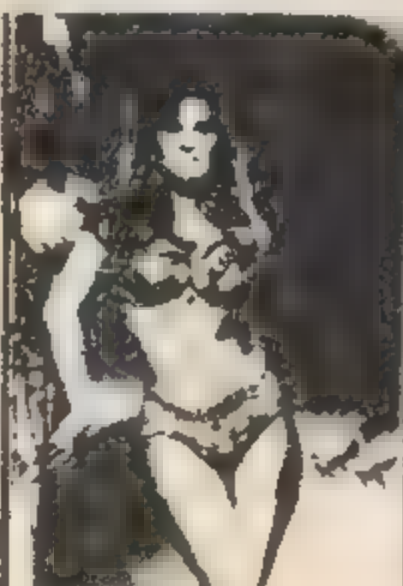
SHIRLEY
TEMPLE
83 - Child



RAQUEL
WELCH
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90 - Bust



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91 - Myra



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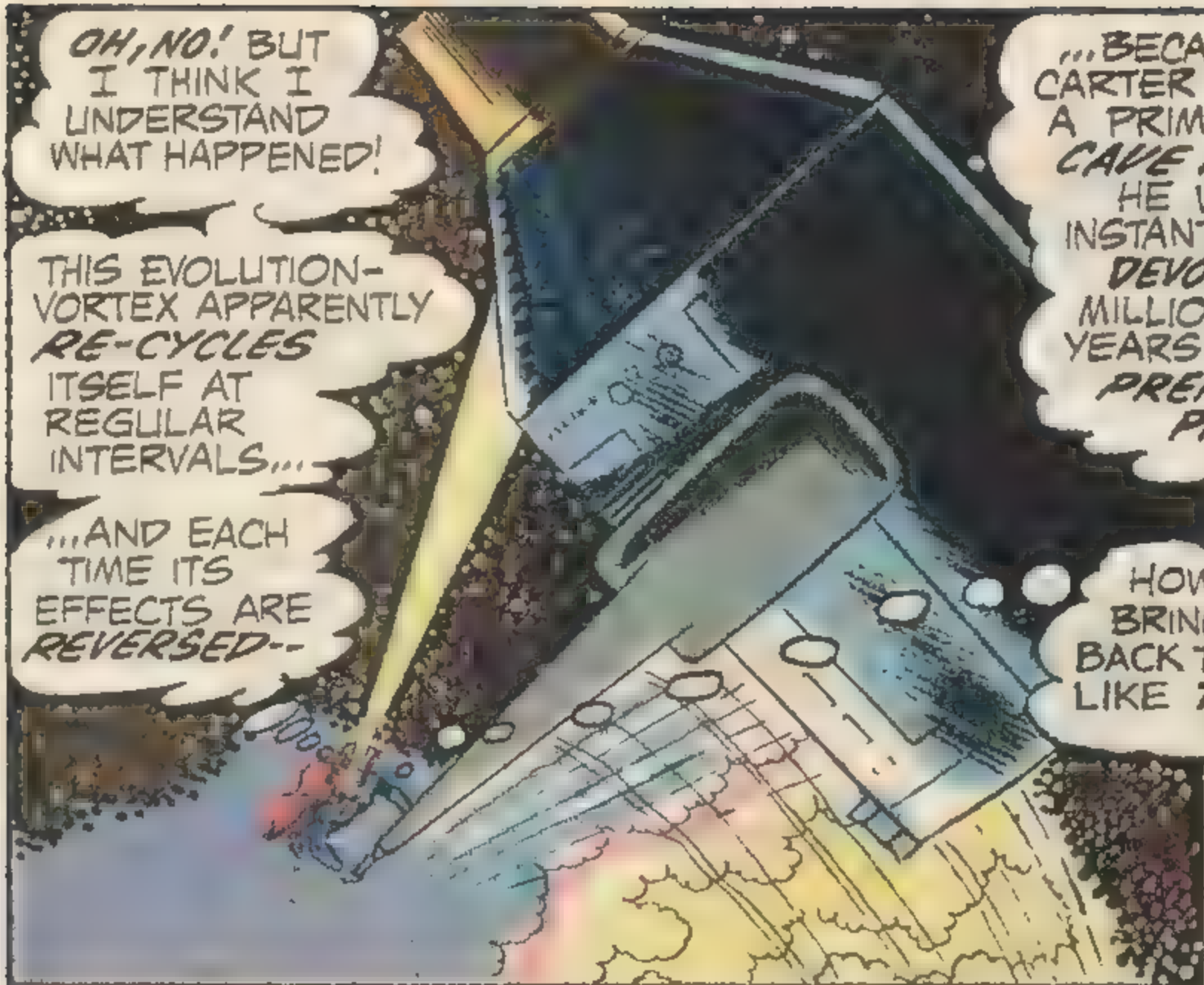
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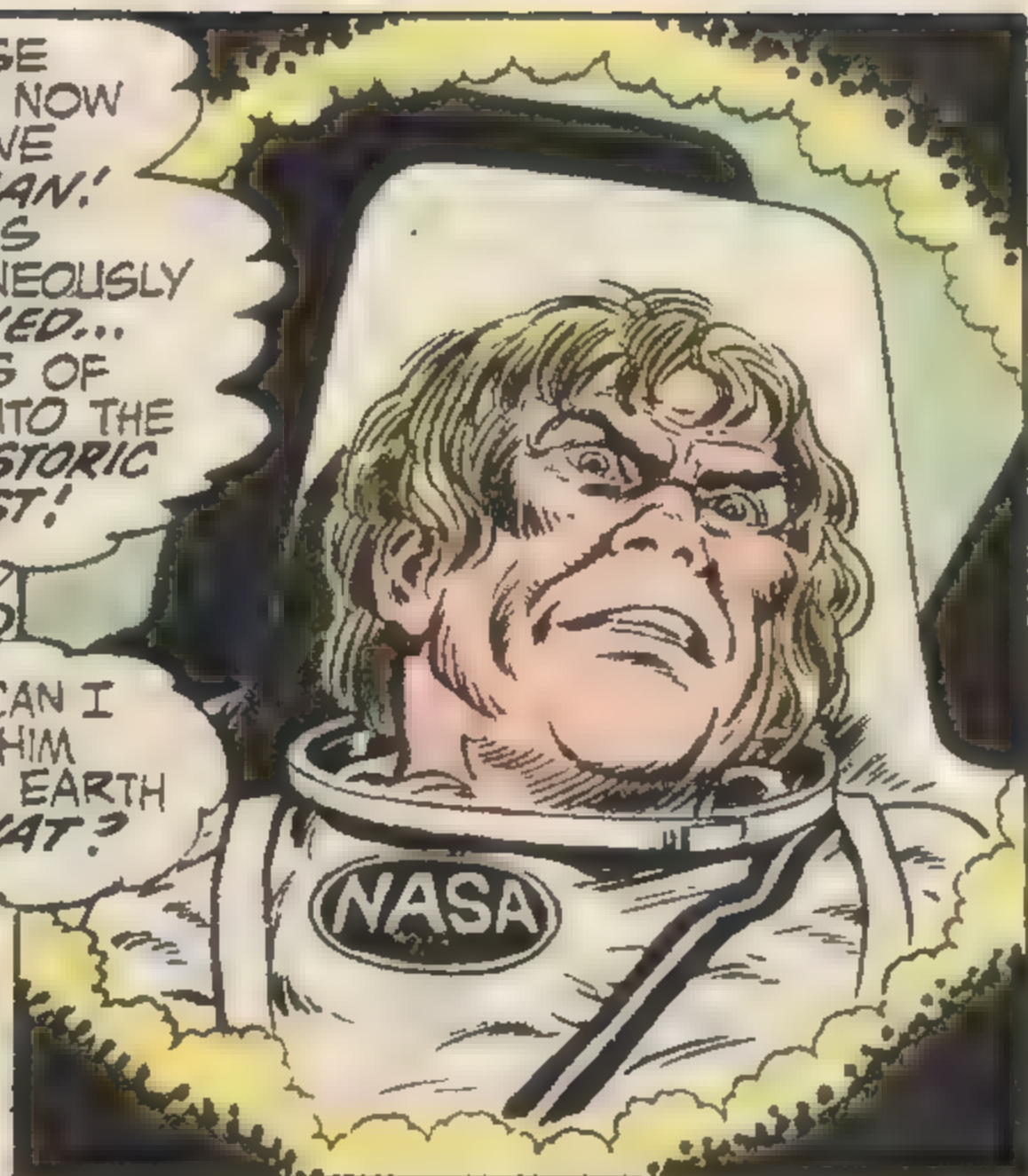
OH, NO! BUT
I THINK I
UNDERSTAND
WHAT HAPPENED!

THIS EVOLUTION-
VORTEX APPARENTLY
RE-CYCLES
ITSELF AT
REGULAR
INTERVALS...

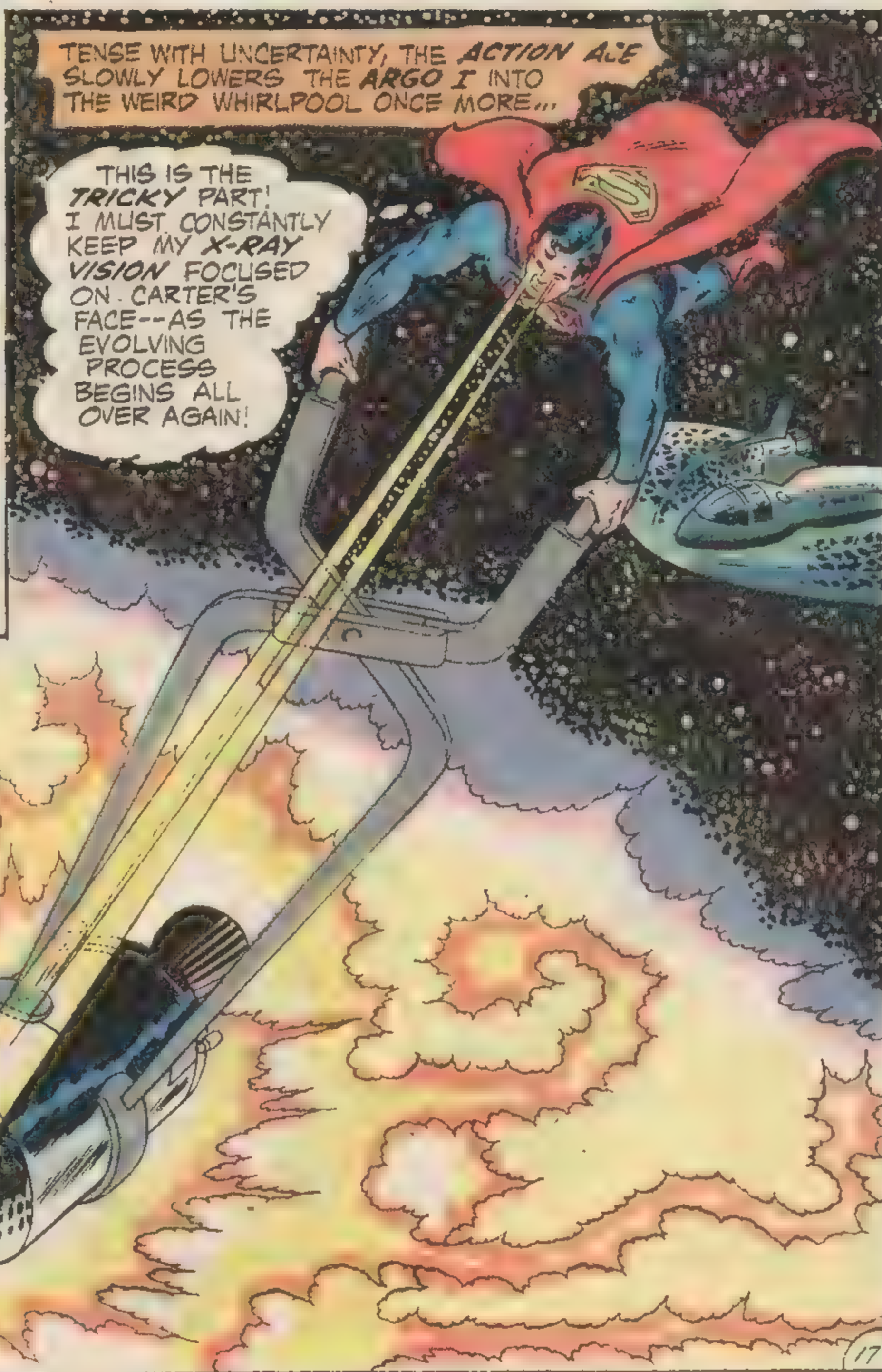
...AND EACH
TIME ITS
EFFECTS ARE
REVERSED--

...BECAUSE
CARTER IS NOW
A PRIMITIVE
CAVE MAN!
HE WAS
INSTANTANEOUSLY
DEVOLVED...
MILLIONS OF
YEARS INTO THE
PREHISTORIC
PAST!

HOW CAN I
BRING HIM
BACK TO EARTH
LIKE **THAT?**



I KNOW ONLY ONE WAY
I CAN HELP CARTER NOW!
IT'S RISKY... BUT HIS ONLY
HOPE! THERE'S NO
ALTERNATIVE!



TENSE WITH UNCERTAINTY, THE **ACTION ALE**
SLOWLY LOWERS THE **ARGO I** INTO
THE WEIRD WHIRLPOOL ONCE MORE...

THIS IS THE
TRICKY PART!
I MUST CONSTANTLY
KEEP MY **X-RAY**
VISION FOCUSED
ON CARTER'S
FACE--AS THE
EVOLVING
PROCESS
BEGINS ALL
OVER AGAIN!

A MIND-STAGGERING SPECTACLE UNFOLDS AS **SUPERMAN**, WIDE-EYED WITH AWE, WATCHES A MILLION YEARS PHASE BY IN MERE MOMENTS.

MY TIMING HAS TO BE ABSOLUTELY PERFECT!

AS CARTER EVOLVES AHEAD THROUGH TIME...

...I WATCH FOR THE EXACT MOMENT...

...WHEN HE REACHES THE EVOLUTIONARY LEVEL...

...OF THE 20TH CENTURY MAN...

...WHICH IS JUST ABOUT...

...**NOW**...

THE **ARGO** IS ALMOST OUT OF OXYGEN-- I'LL TAKE CARTER BACK TO EARTH IN MY SPACECRAFT!

GAA!
THATHA!
DOHGU!

PHYSICALLY HE'S THE SAME AS HE WAS... BUT THE DEVOLUTION EFFECT ERASED ALL THE KNOWLEDGE AND MEMORIES HE ONCE HAD! HIS MIND'S A TOTAL **BLANK**!

HE'LL HAVE TO BE COMPLETELY RE-TRAINED AND EDUCATED!

I'LL RETURN LATER TO BUILD A WALL OF ASTEROIDS AROUND THE VORTEX SO NO FUTURE EXPLORERS WILL EVER SUFFER CARTER'S FATE!

SOME SECRETS IN OUTER SPACE MAN IS NOT YET MEANT TO KNOW!

The End

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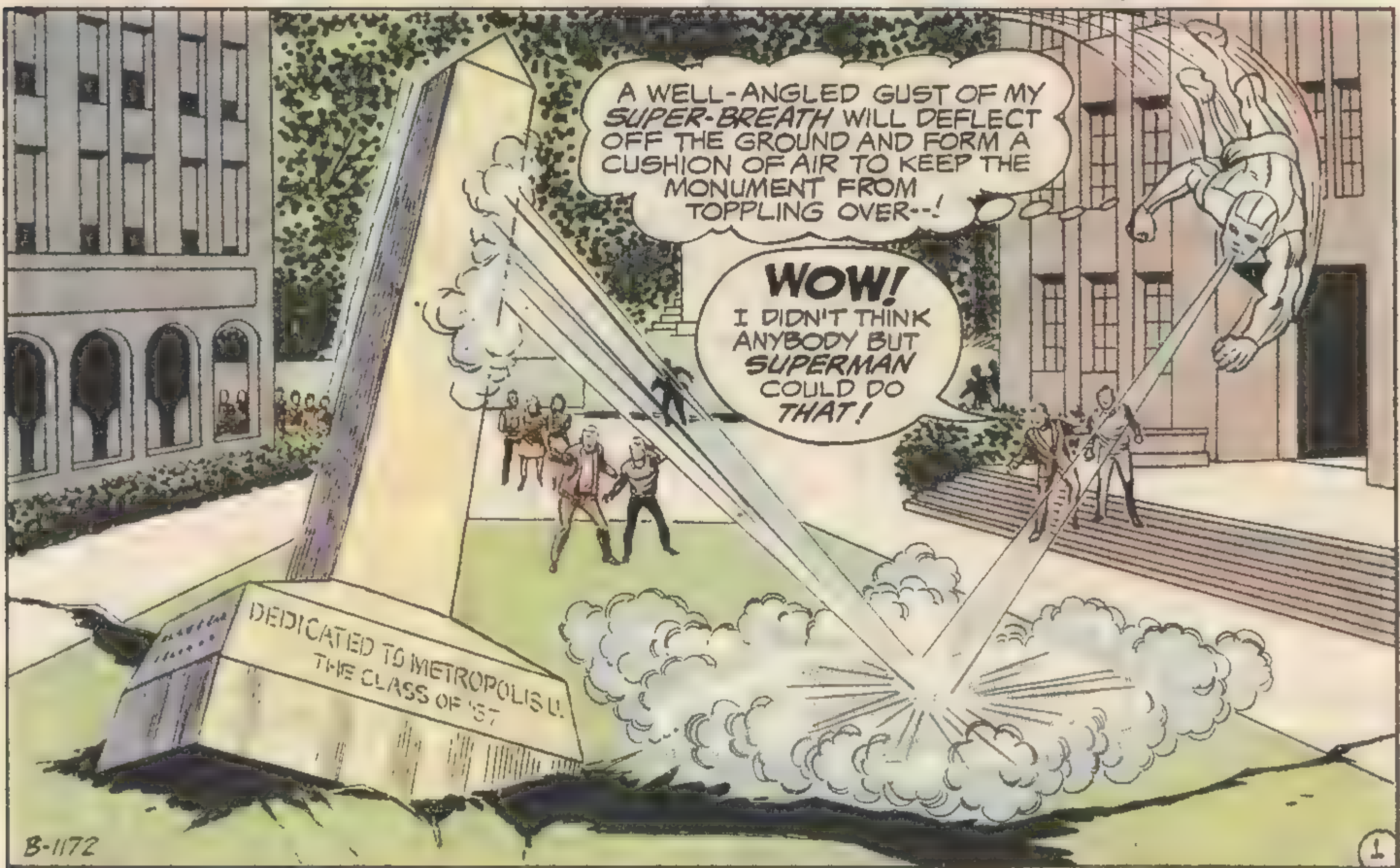
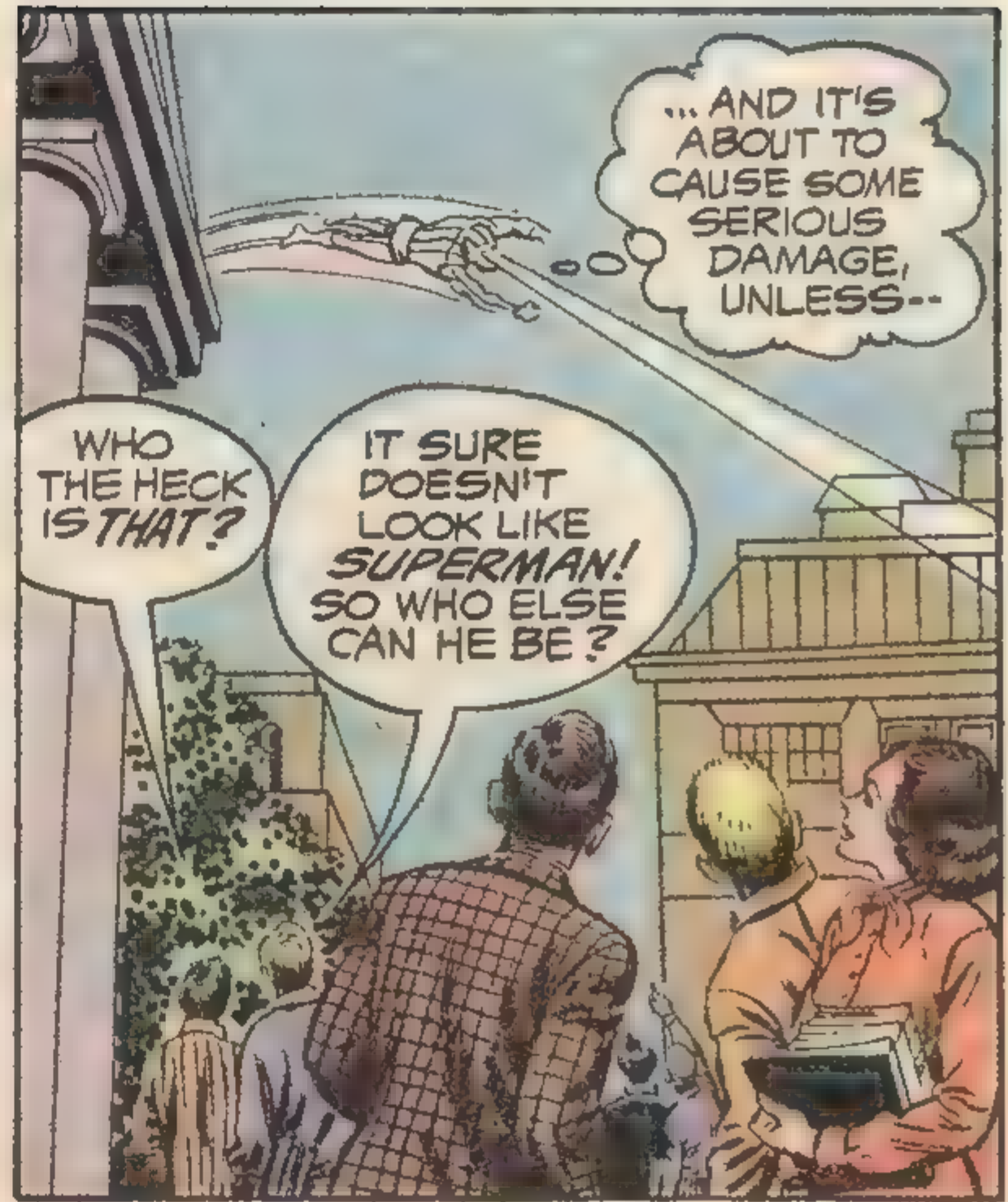
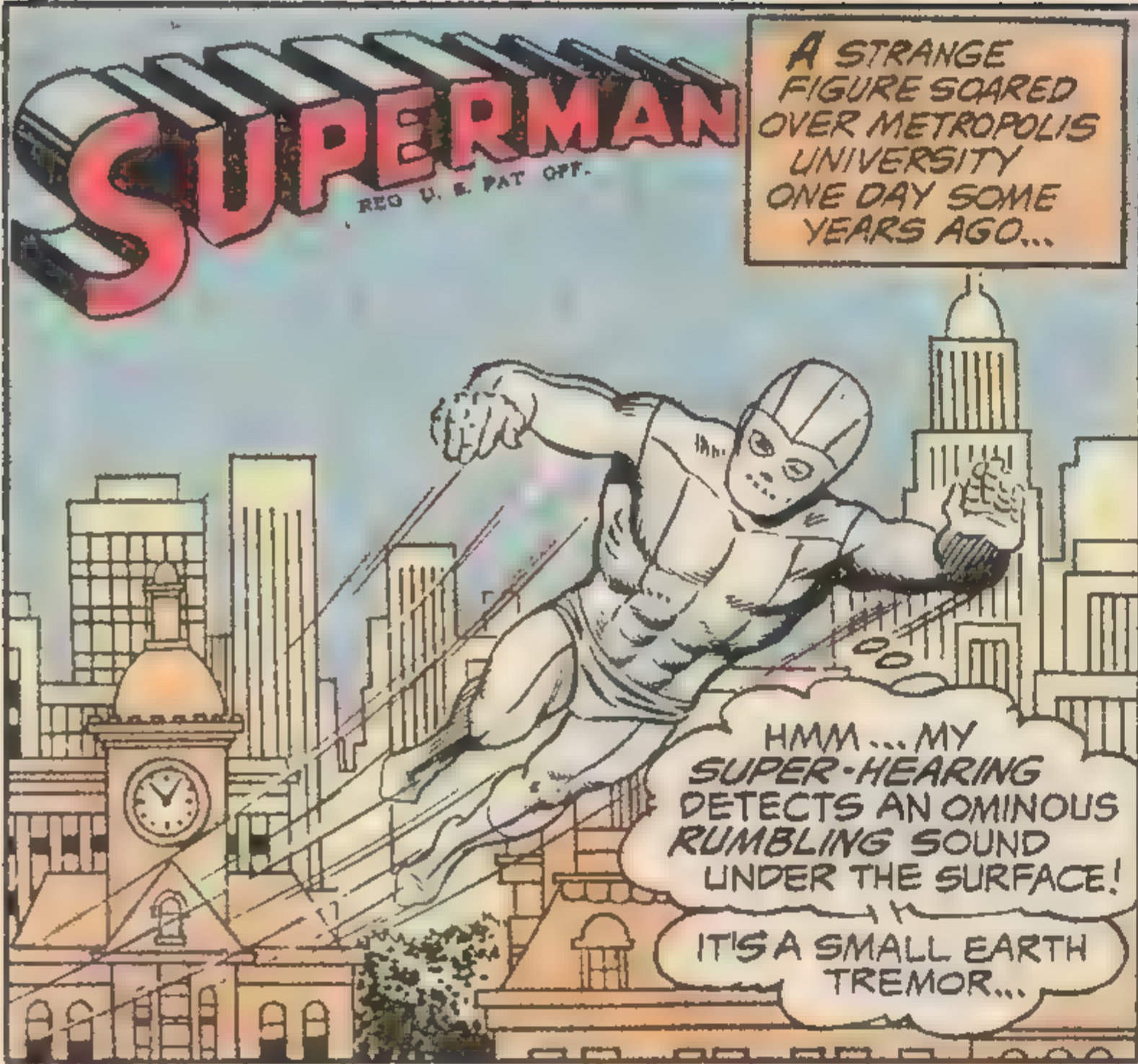
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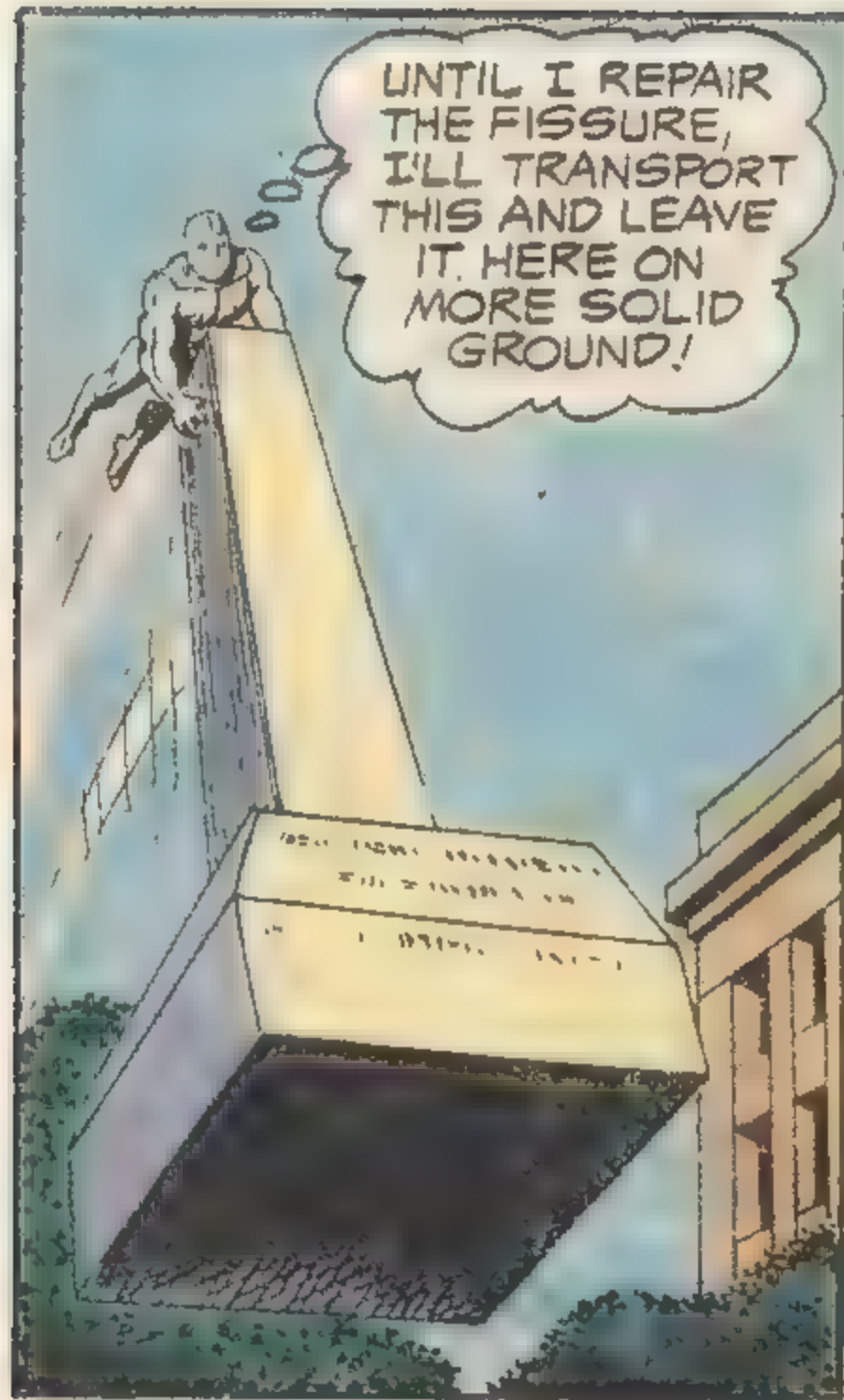


YES, WHO ELSE BUT THE ACTION ACE HIMSELF COULD HAVE PERFORMED SUCH AN ASTOUNDING FEAT? X STANDS FOR THE UNKNOWN-- AND THERE WAS NO OTHER WORD TO DESCRIBE THIS NAMELESS, FACELESS CRUSADER-- WHOSE BRIEF APPEARANCE WILL ALWAYS REMAIN A MYSTERY IN THE ANNALS OF METROPOLIS U.!

"THE SHOCKING SECRET OF SUPER-X!"

ART: SWAN AND ANDERSON

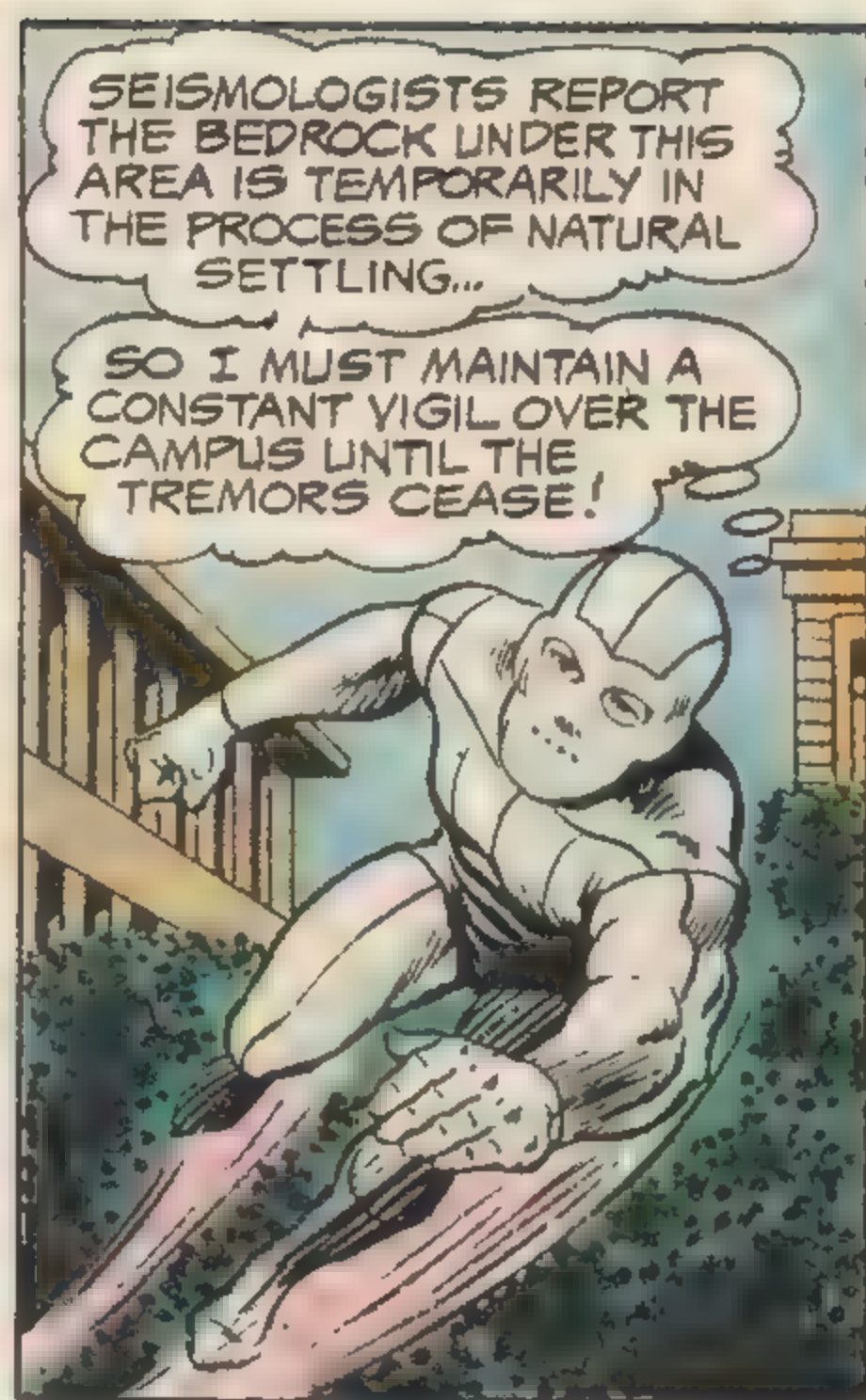
STORY: CARY BATES



UNTIL I REPAIR THE FISSURE, I'LL TRANSPORT THIS AND LEAVE IT HERE ON MORE SOLID GROUND!

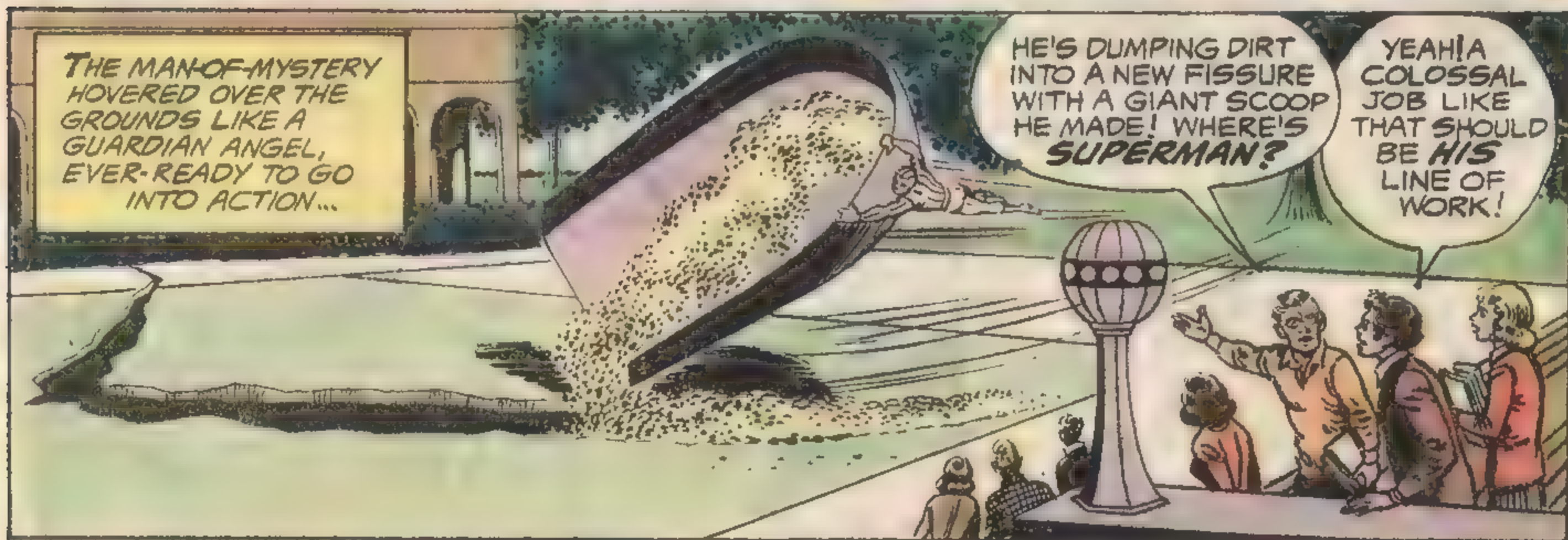


THIS IS THE **SECOND** SMALL QUAKE THAT ROCKED THE UNIVERSITY IN THE PAST WEEK!



SEISMOLOGISTS REPORT THE BEDROCK UNDER THIS AREA IS TEMPORARILY IN THE PROCESS OF NATURAL SETTLING...

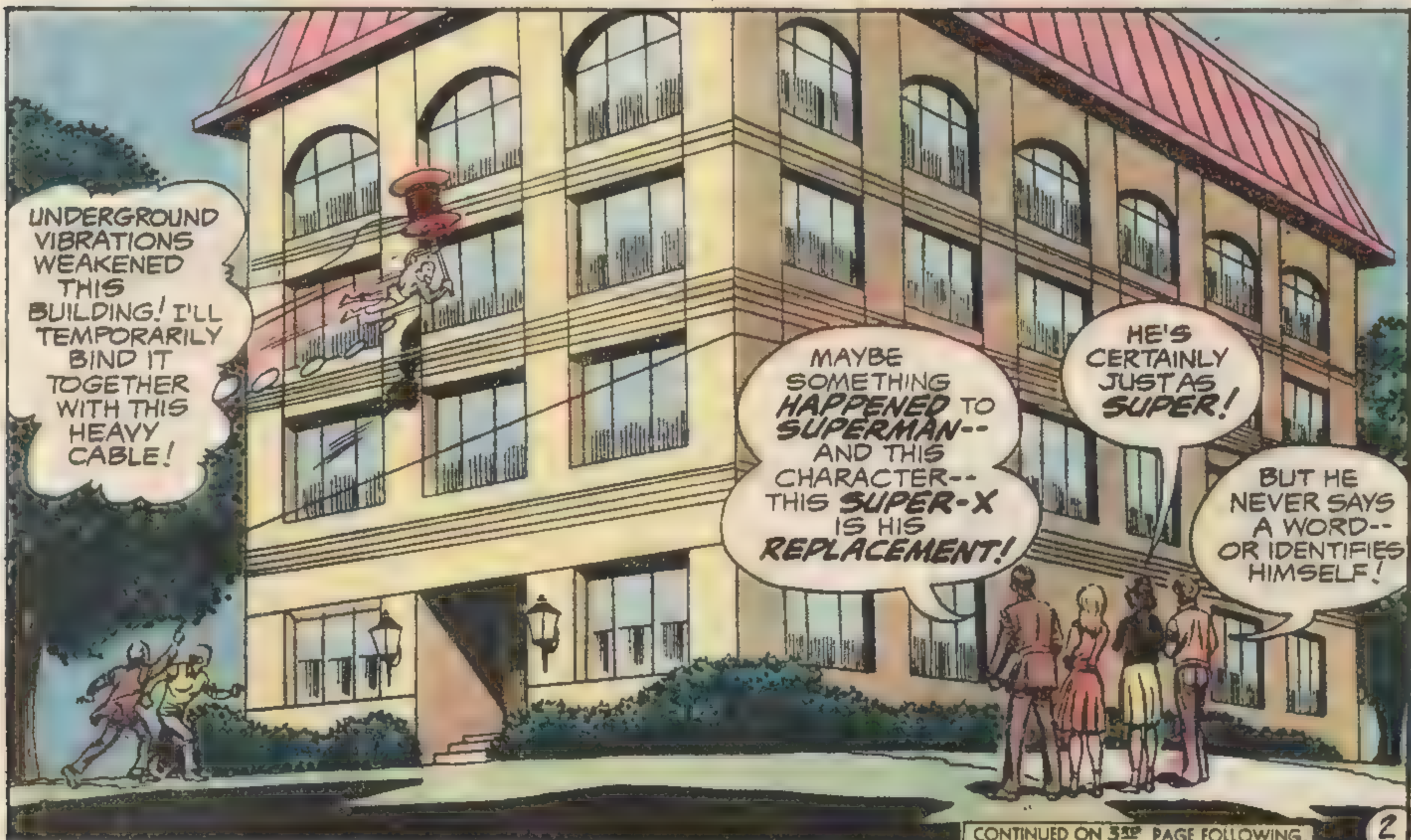
SO I MUST MAINTAIN A CONSTANT VIGIL OVER THE CAMPUS UNTIL THE TREMORS CEASE!



THE MAN-OF-MYSTERY HOVERED OVER THE GROUNDS LIKE A GUARDIAN ANGEL, EVER-READY TO GO INTO ACTION...

HE'S DUMPING DIRT INTO A NEW FISSURE WITH A GIANT SCOOP HE MADE! WHERE'S **SUPERMAN**?

YEAH! A COLOSSAL JOB LIKE THAT SHOULD BE **HIS** LINE OF WORK!



UNDERGROUND VIBRATIONS WEAKENED THIS BUILDING! I'LL TEMPORARILY BIND IT TOGETHER WITH THIS HEAVY CABLE!

MAYBE SOMETHING HAPPENED TO **SUPERMAN**-- AND THIS CHARACTER-- THIS **SUPER-X** IS HIS REPLACEMENT!

HE'S CERTAINLY JUST AS **SUPER**!

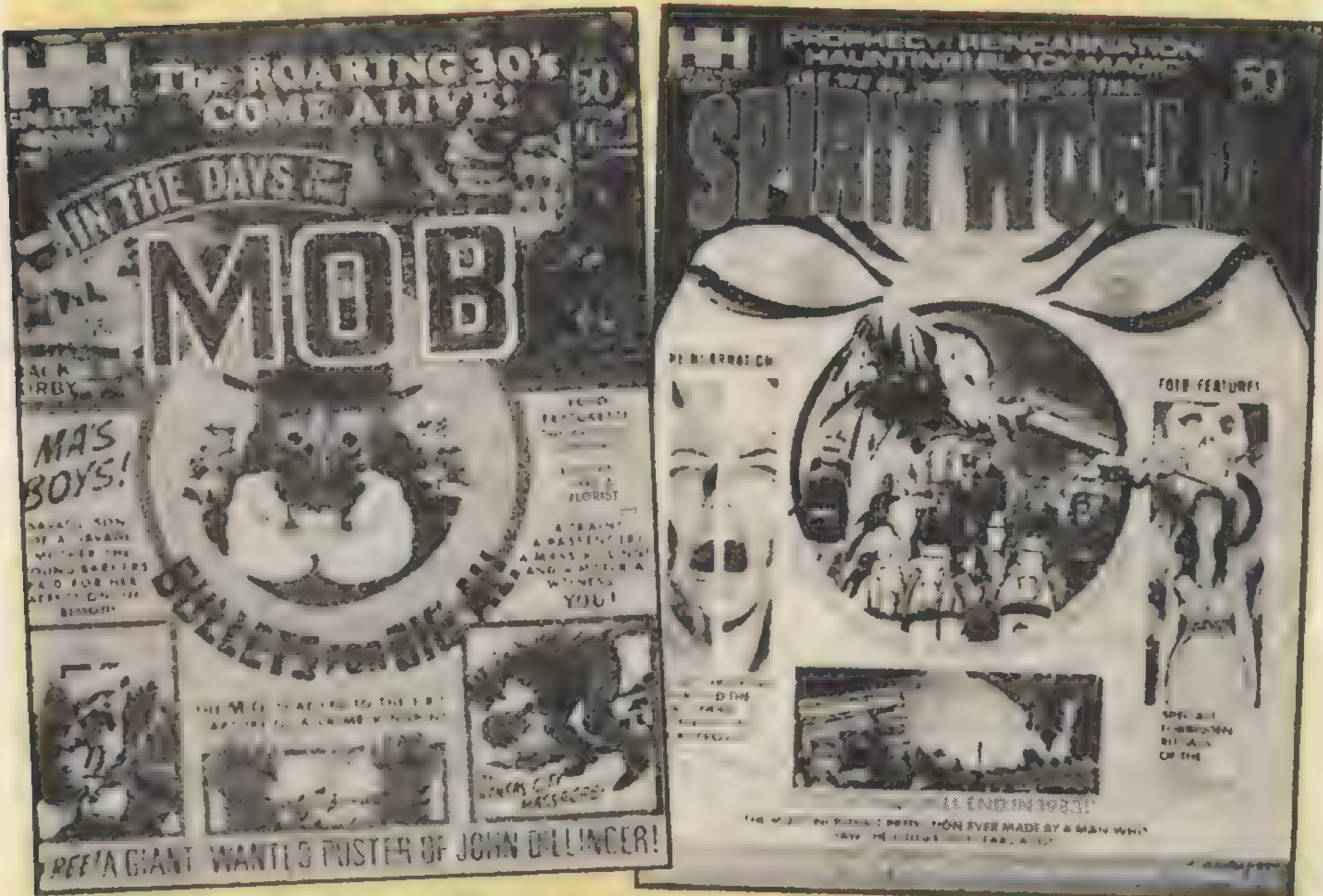
BUT HE NEVER SAYS A WORD-- OR IDENTIFIES HIMSELF!

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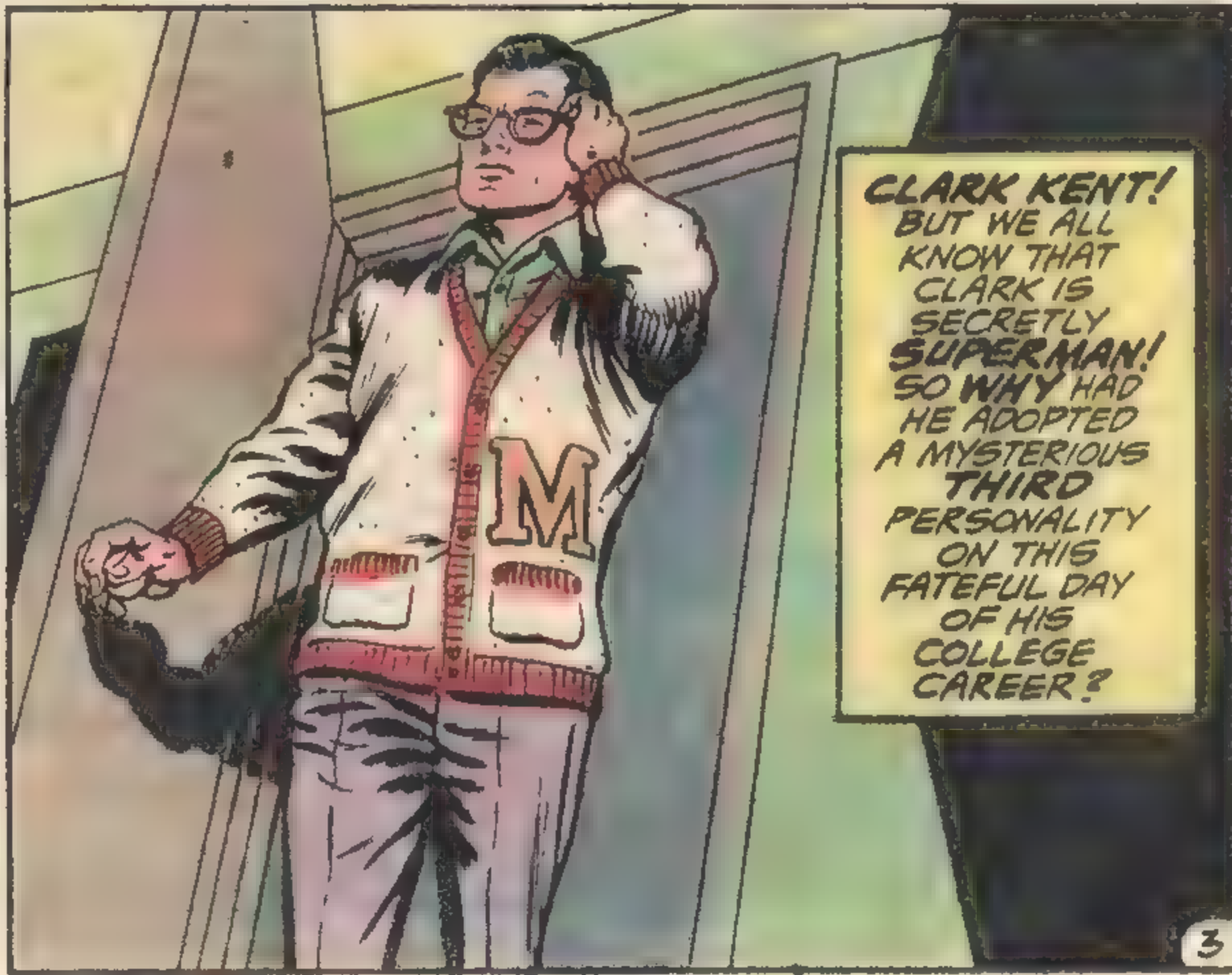
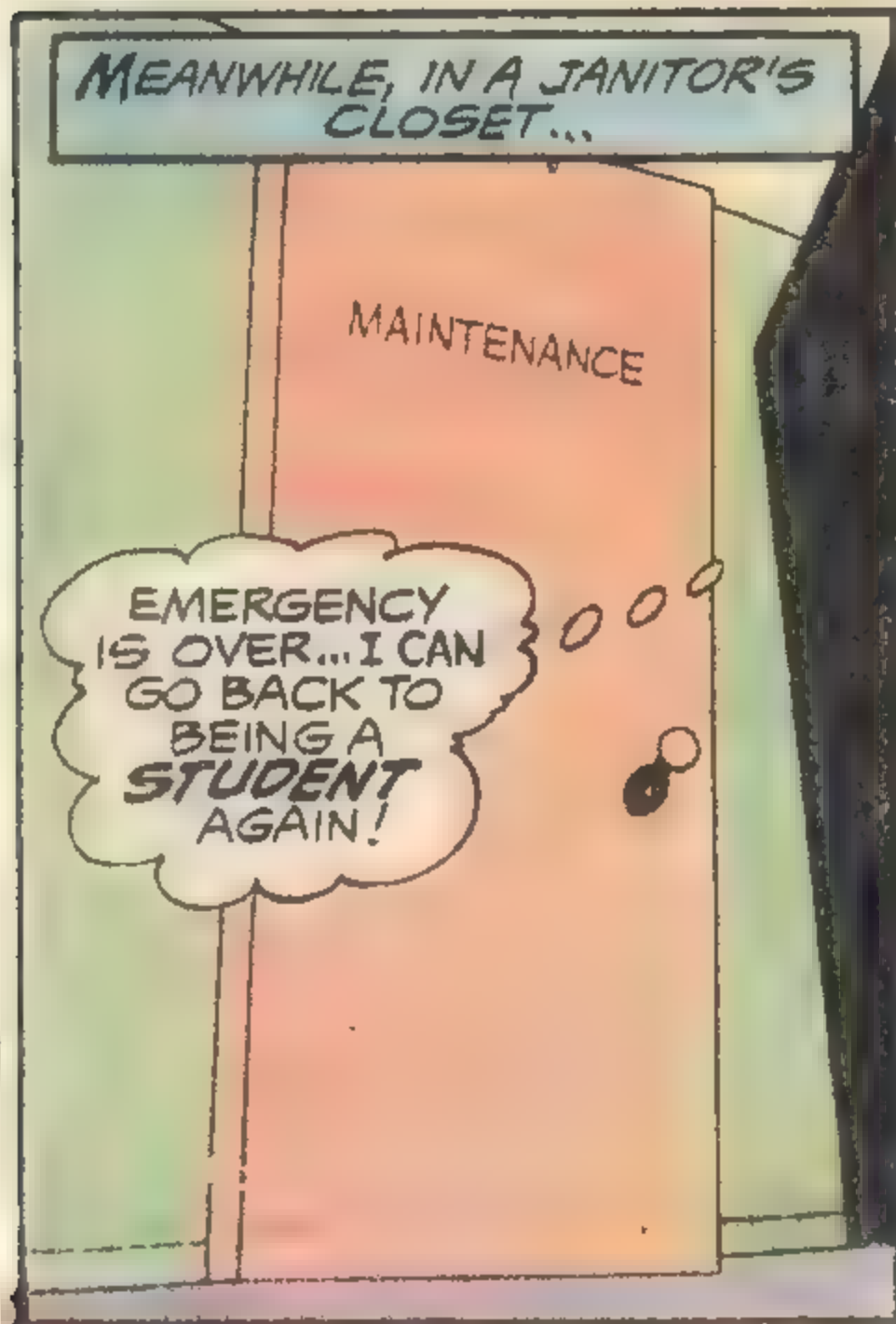
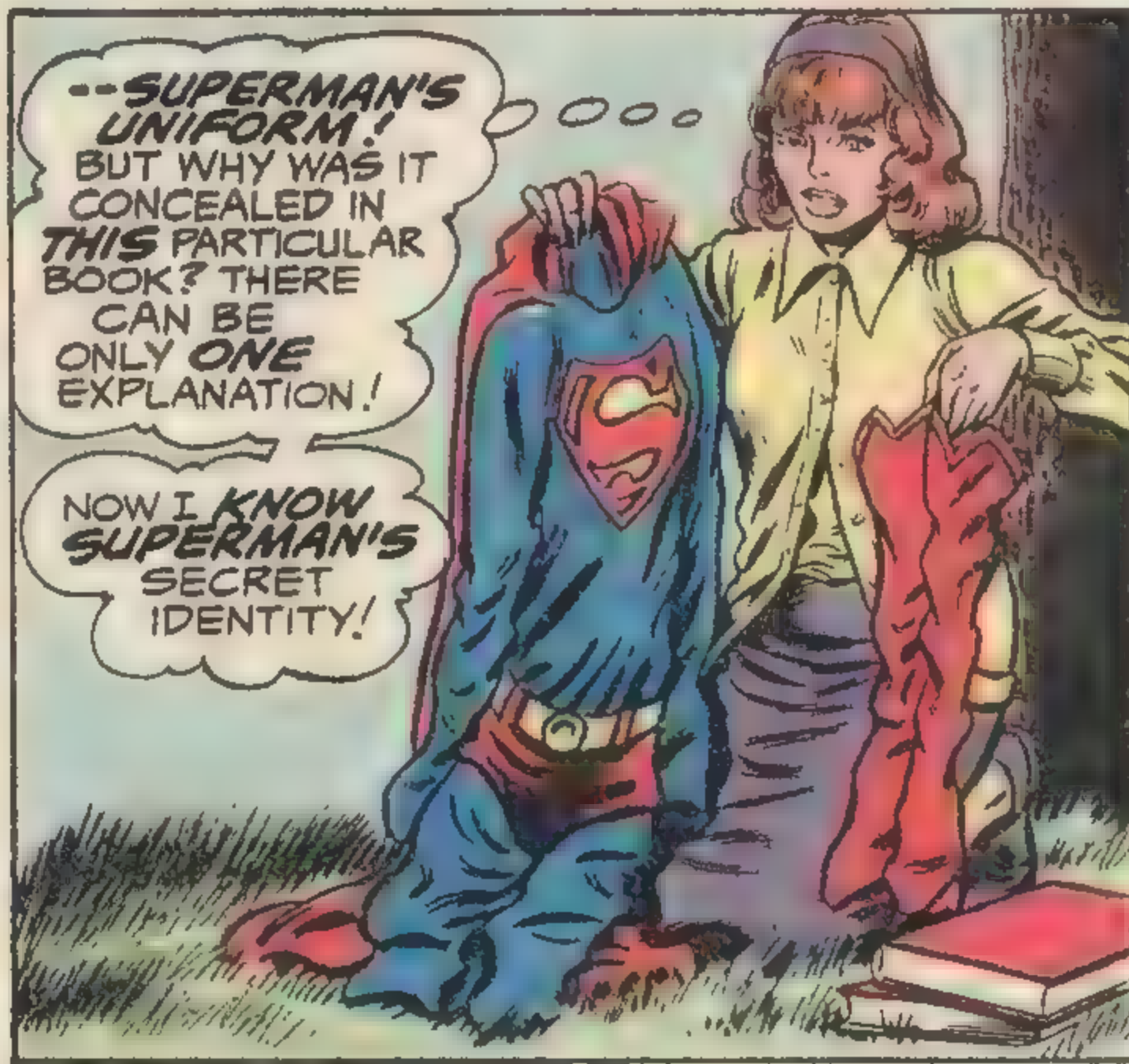
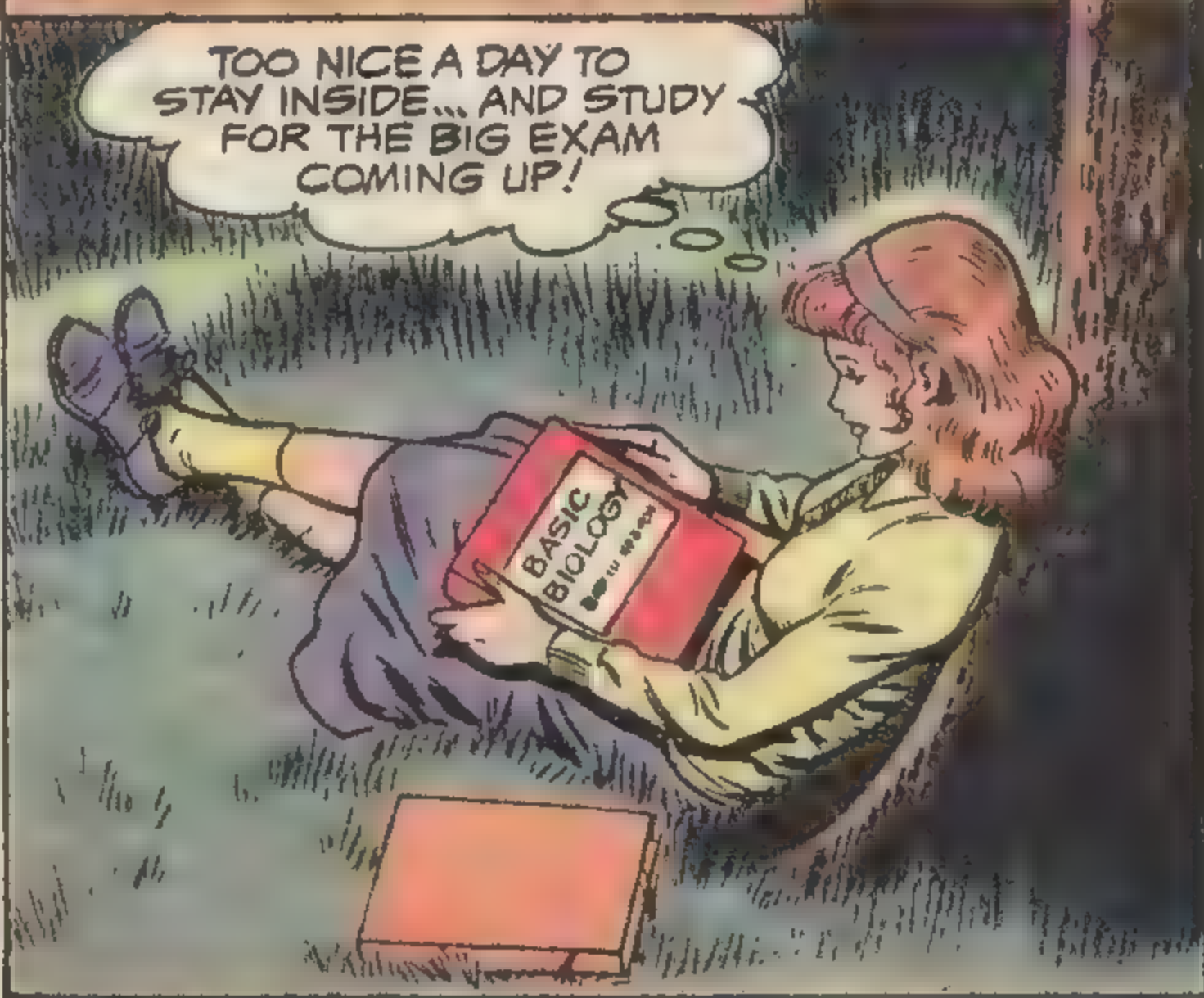
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HOURS LATER, AFTER THE DANGER PASSED,
AND THE CAMPUS WAS CALM ONCE MORE...



AT THAT MOMENT, PRETTY CO-ED LANA LANG
SETTLED DOWN UNDER A TREE...



For the answer, let us go back several hours to the preceding morning...when a youthful **SUPERMAN** was visiting the university's top biology professor, also a brilliant **BACTERIOLOGIST**...

WHAT AN ACHIEVEMENT, PROFESSOR SMITHERS! YOU ACTUALLY FOUND A WAY TO CREATE **ARTIFICIAL GERMS** THAT ARE **BENEFICIAL!**

YES! NOT ALL BACTERIA HAVE TO BE HARMFUL, AS MANY PEOPLE BELIEVE!

PAIN-KILLING STRAIN

AMNESIA STRAIN

FEVER-BREAKING STRAIN

SLEEP-INDUCING STRAIN

MAGNIFIED 10,000 TIMES

HERE IN MY LAB, I WAS ABLE TO SYNTHESIZE SEVERAL **NEW TYPES** THAT MAY PROVE VERY **HELPFUL** TO MANKIND SOMEDAY! MY PRELIMINARY TESTS ARE QUITE PROMISING!

BUT ONE OF MY EXPERIMENTS **BACKFIRED!** THAT'S WHY I ASKED YOU TO COME HERE!

GREAT KRYPTON! BACTERIA-- THE SIZE OF **GOLDFISH!** THAT'S **IMPOSSIBLE!**

I WISH IT WERE! BUT THIS FREAK STRAIN I CREATED HAS ALREADY MAGNIFIED ITSELF, **THOUSANDS OF TIMES--** AND IS STILL GROWING!

IF THOSE SYNTHETIC GERM **GIANTS** CAME INTO CONTACT WITH THE ATMOSPHERE, **SUPERMAN!** THEY'D SPREAD, AND CAUSE A MASSIVE **EPIDEMIC!** AND WHO KNOWS **WHAT HORRIBLE** EFFECTS THEY MIGHT HAVE ON US?

I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN, PROFESSOR! I'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE--!



THE ONLY PLACE
FOR THESE
MULTIPLYING
MONSTERS IS
DEEP SPACE--
FAR AWAY
FROM EARTH,
WHERE THEY
CAN'T HARM
ANYTHING!



But as **SUPERMAN** passed through the
frigid regions of the stratosphere...

OH NO! THE JAR
IS **SHATTERING!**
I FORGOT ABOUT
THE EXTREME
TEMPERATURE
CHANGE AT
THIS ALTITUDE!

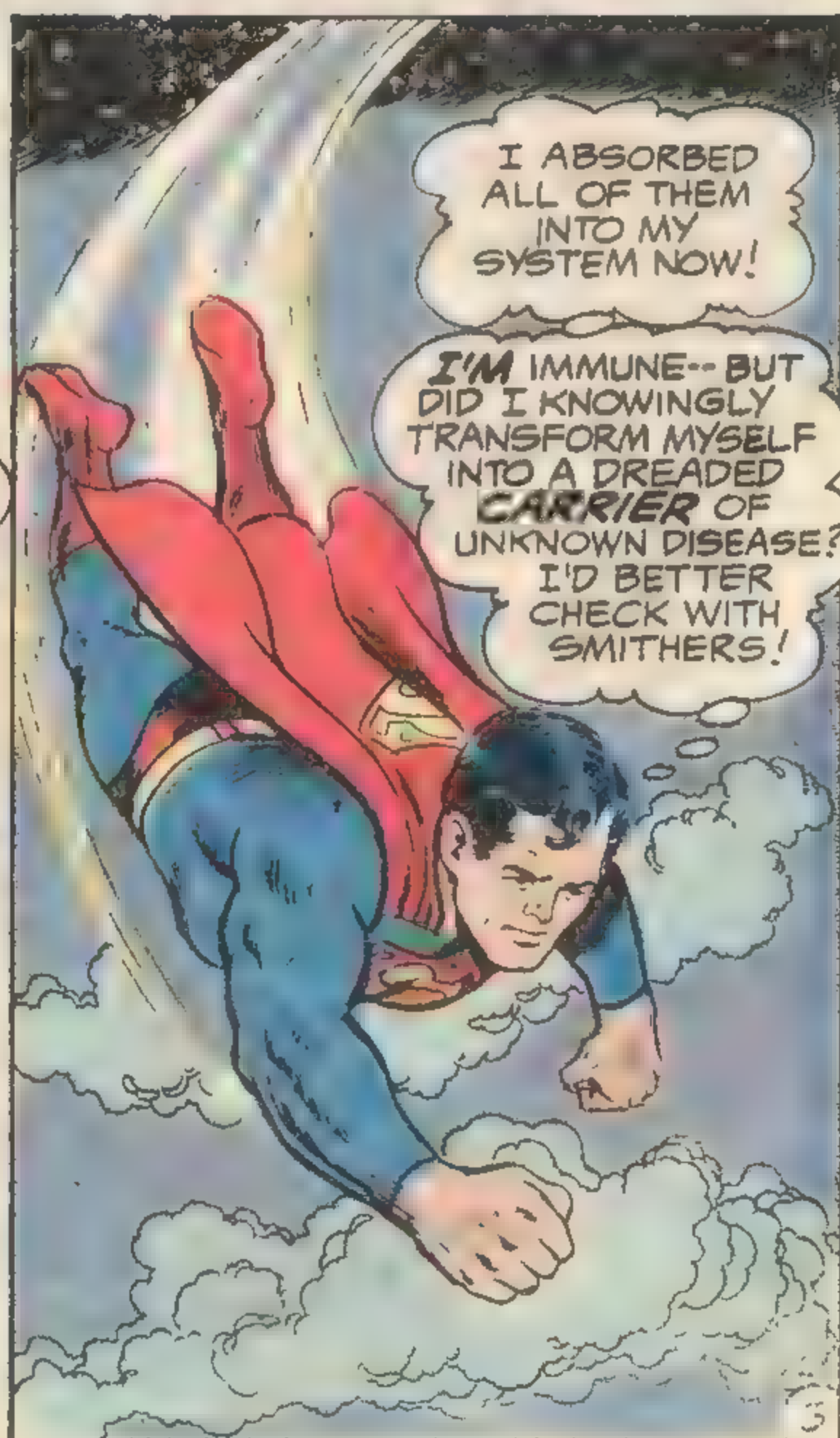
THE GERMS
ARE **FREE**--
AND IT'S **MY**
FAULT!



ONLY ONE WAY TO
CORRECT MY MISTAKE--

BY USING
SUPER-SUCTION,
I CAN **INHALE**
THE LETHAL
BACTERIA
BEFORE THEY
CAN SPREAD!

NO GERM
CAN AFFECT MY
INVULNERABLE
BODY!



I ABSORBED
ALL OF THEM
INTO MY
SYSTEM NOW!

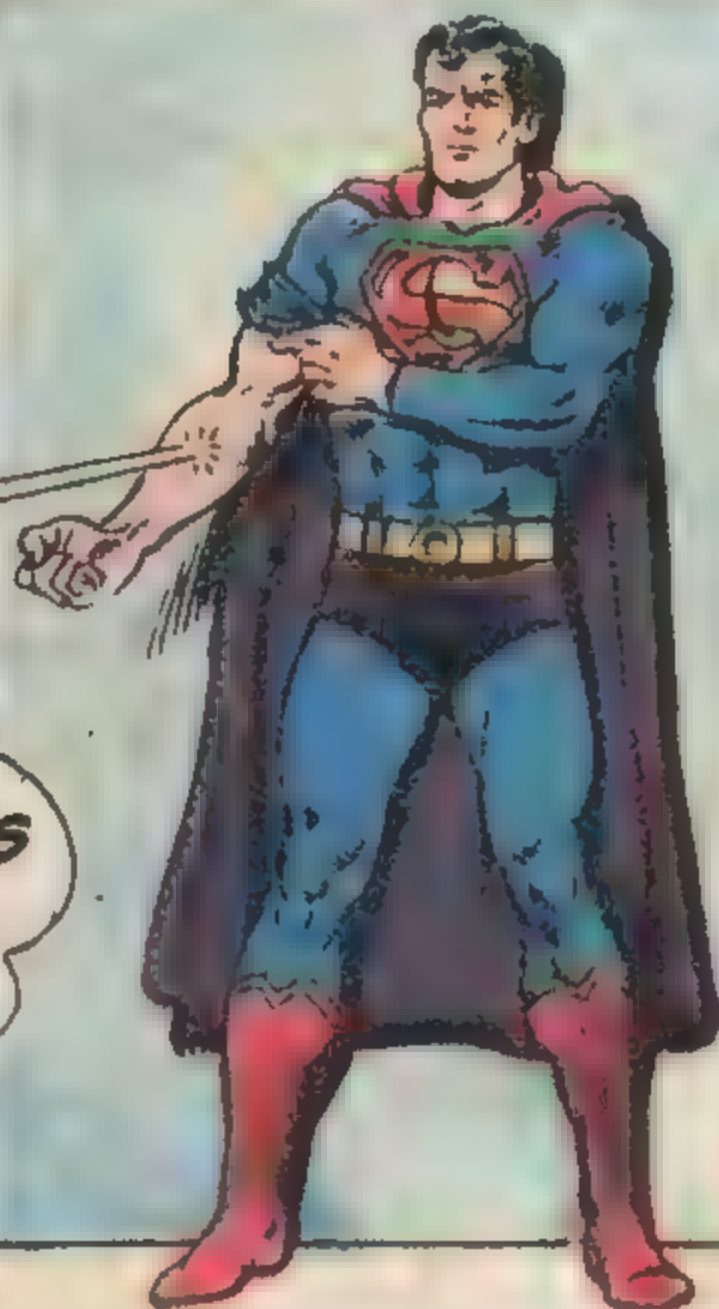
I'M IMMUNE-- BUT
DID I KNOWINGLY
TRANSFORM MYSELF
INTO A DREADED
CARRIER OF
UNKNOWN DISEASE?
I'D BETTER
CHECK WITH
SMITHERS!

Soon...

YOU WERE RIGHT, **SUPERMAN!** YOU'D INFECTION **ANYONE** WHO CAME WITHIN A FEW FEET OF YOU!

ALTHOUGH YOUR UNIFORM IS CLEAN, THE BACTERIA YOU CONSUMED **CONTAMINATED** EVERY SQUARE INCH OF YOUR **SKIN!**

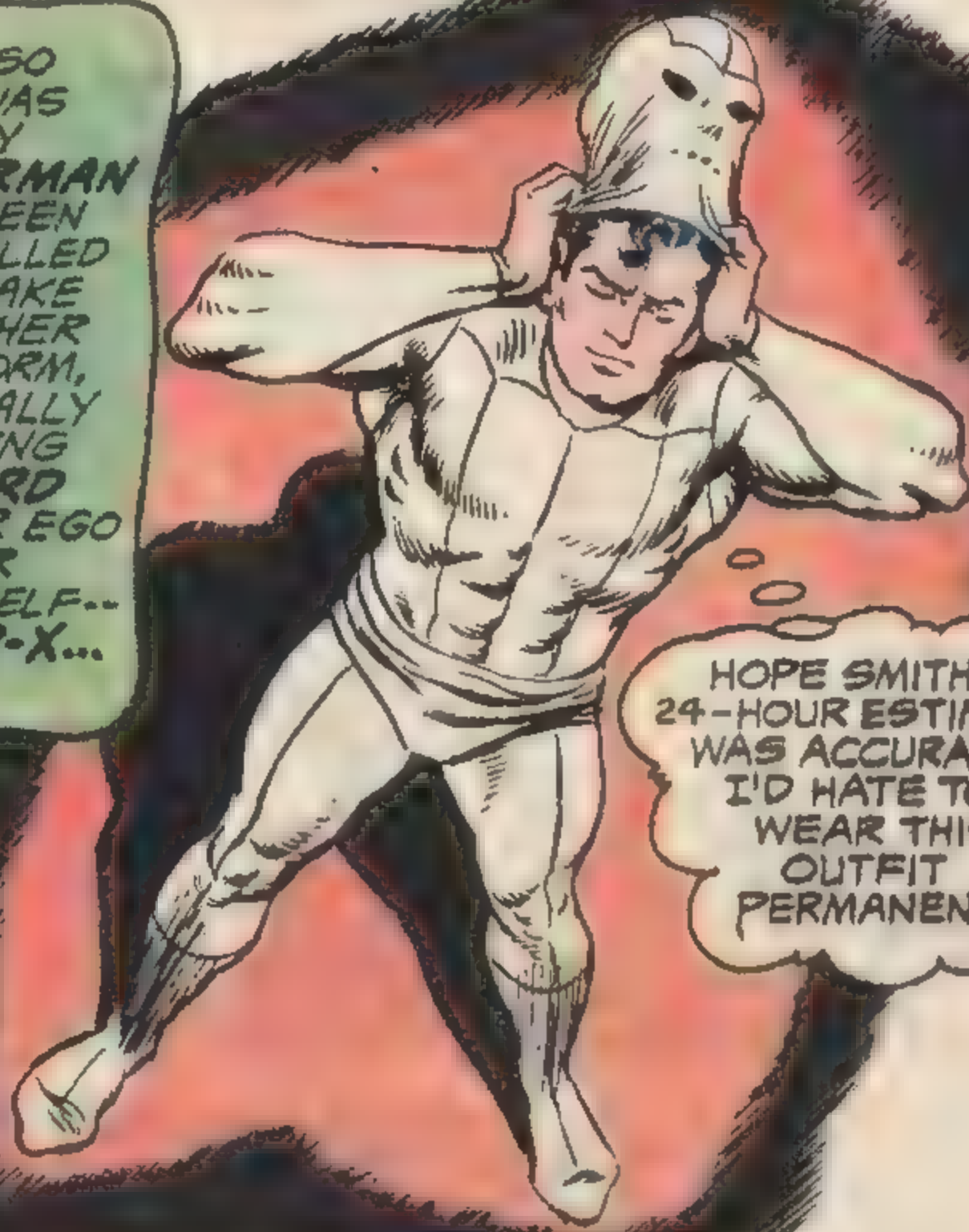
BUT YOUR SYSTEM'S **SUPER-ANTIBODIES** SHOULD WIPE OUT THE GERMS WITHIN 24 HOURS!



UNTIL THEN, YOU'VE **TWO** CHOICES--

EITHER QUARANTINE YOURSELF FROM ALL OTHER HUMANS-- OR YOU MUST WEAR A SPECIALLY **INSULATED, STERILIZED** SUIT AT ALL TIMES TO PROTECT THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU!

AND SO THIS WAS WHY **SUPERMAN** HAD BEEN COMPELLED TO MAKE ANOTHER UNIFORM, VIRTUALLY CREATING A **THIRD** ALTER EGO FOR HIMSELF-- **SUPER-X...**



HOPE SMITHERS' 24-HOUR ESTIMATE WAS ACCURATE! I'D HATE TO WEAR THIS OUTFIT PERMANENTLY!

NOW TO HIDE MY **SUPERMAN** UNIFORM SOMEWHERE UNTIL I'M READY TO WEAR IT AGAIN!

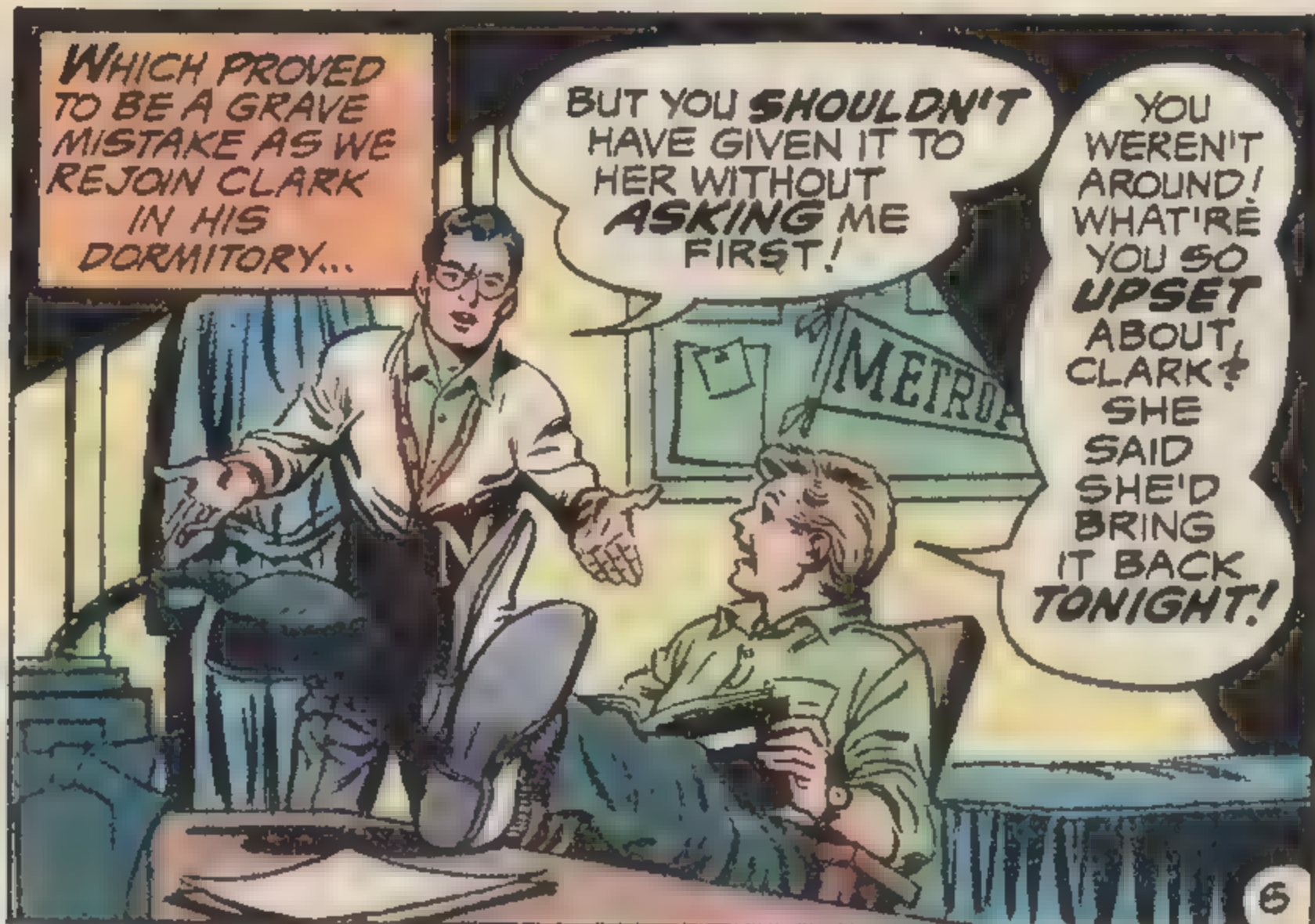


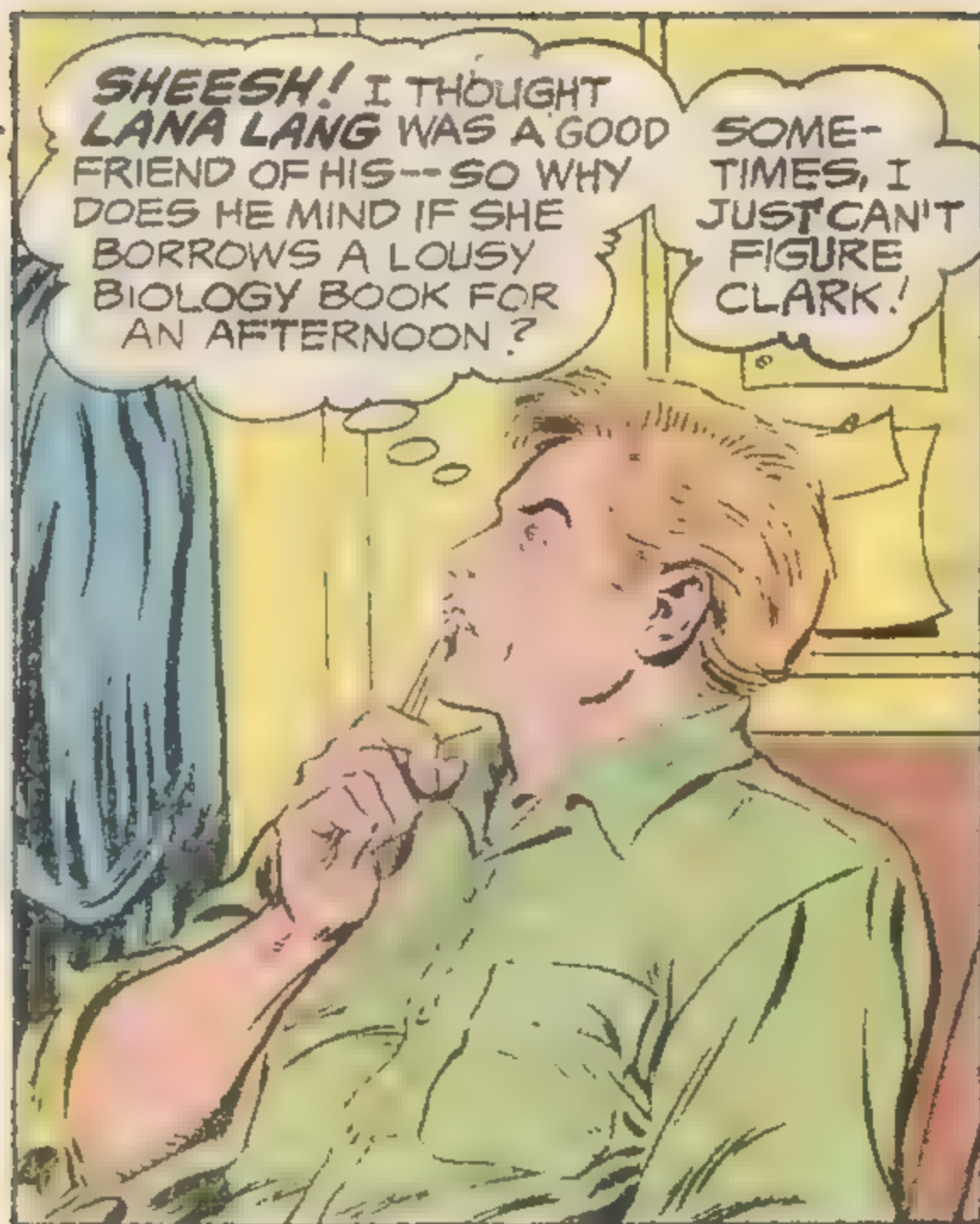
SOMETIMES, THE MOST **OBVIOUS** PLACES ARE THE **SAFEST**-- I'LL CONCEAL IT IN ONE OF **CLARK KENT'S** BELONGINGS!

WHICH PROVED TO BE A GRAVE MISTAKE AS WE REJOIN CLARK IN HIS DORMITORY...

BUT YOU **SHOULDN'T** HAVE GIVEN IT TO HER WITHOUT **ASKING** ME FIRST!

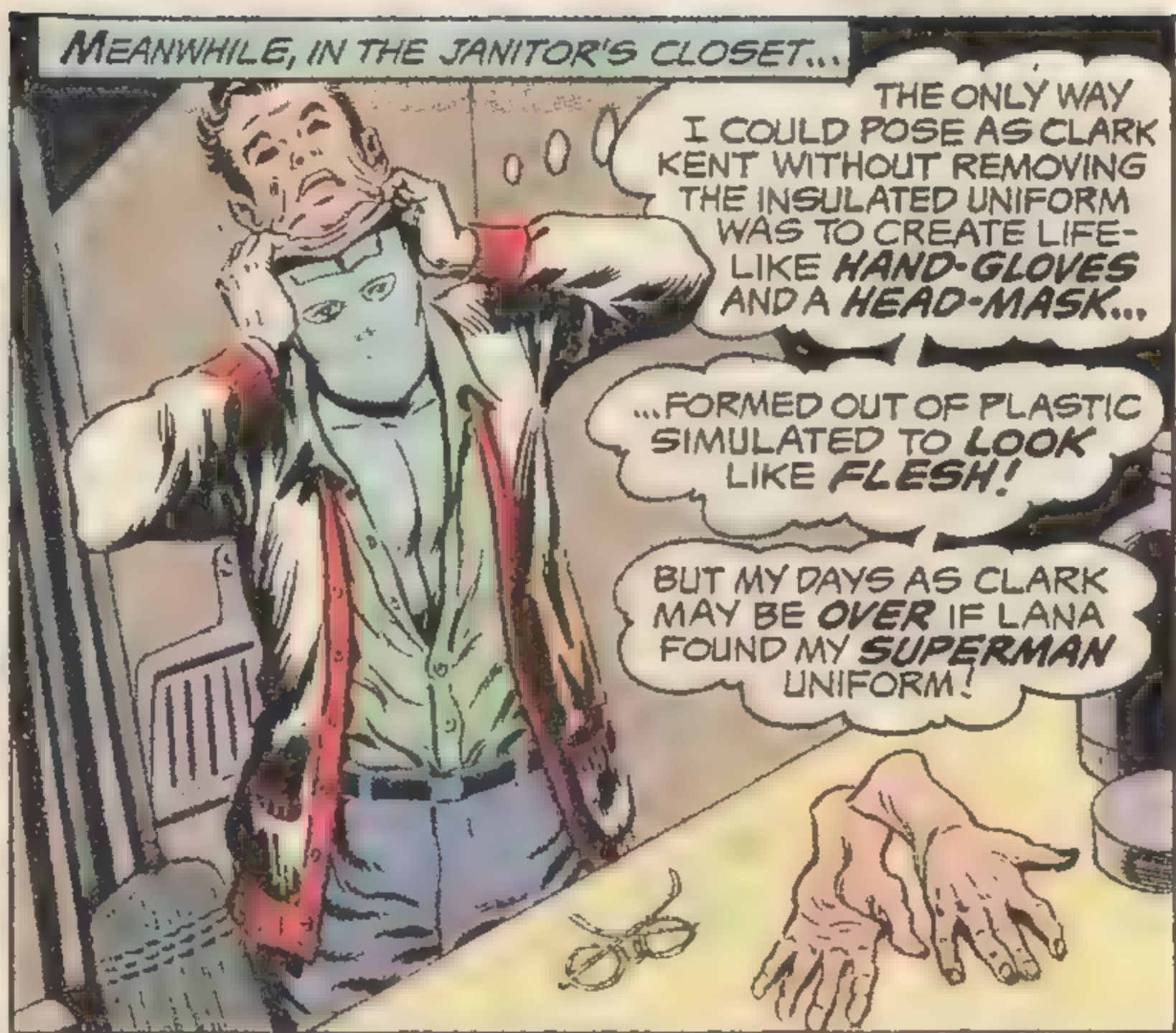
YOU WEREN'T AROUND! WHAT'RE YOU SO **UPSET** ABOUT, CLARK? SHE SAID SHE'D BRING IT BACK TONIGHT!





SHEESH! I THOUGHT **LANA LANG** WAS A GOOD FRIEND OF HIS--SO WHY DOES HE MIND IF SHE BORROWS A LOUSY BIOLOGY BOOK FOR AN AFTERNOON?

SOME-TIMES, I JUST CAN'T FIGURE CLARK!

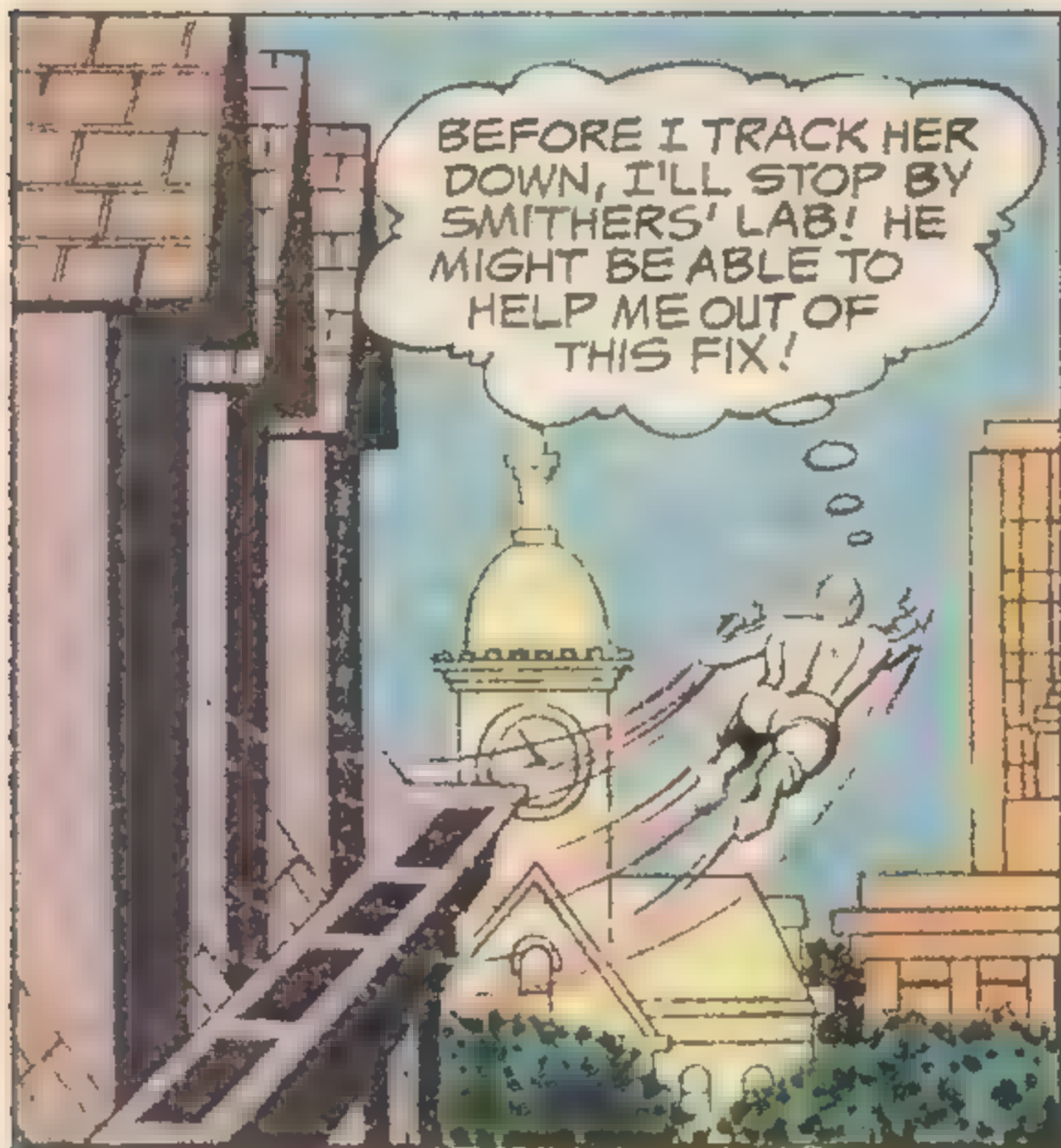


MEANWHILE, IN THE JANITOR'S CLOSET...

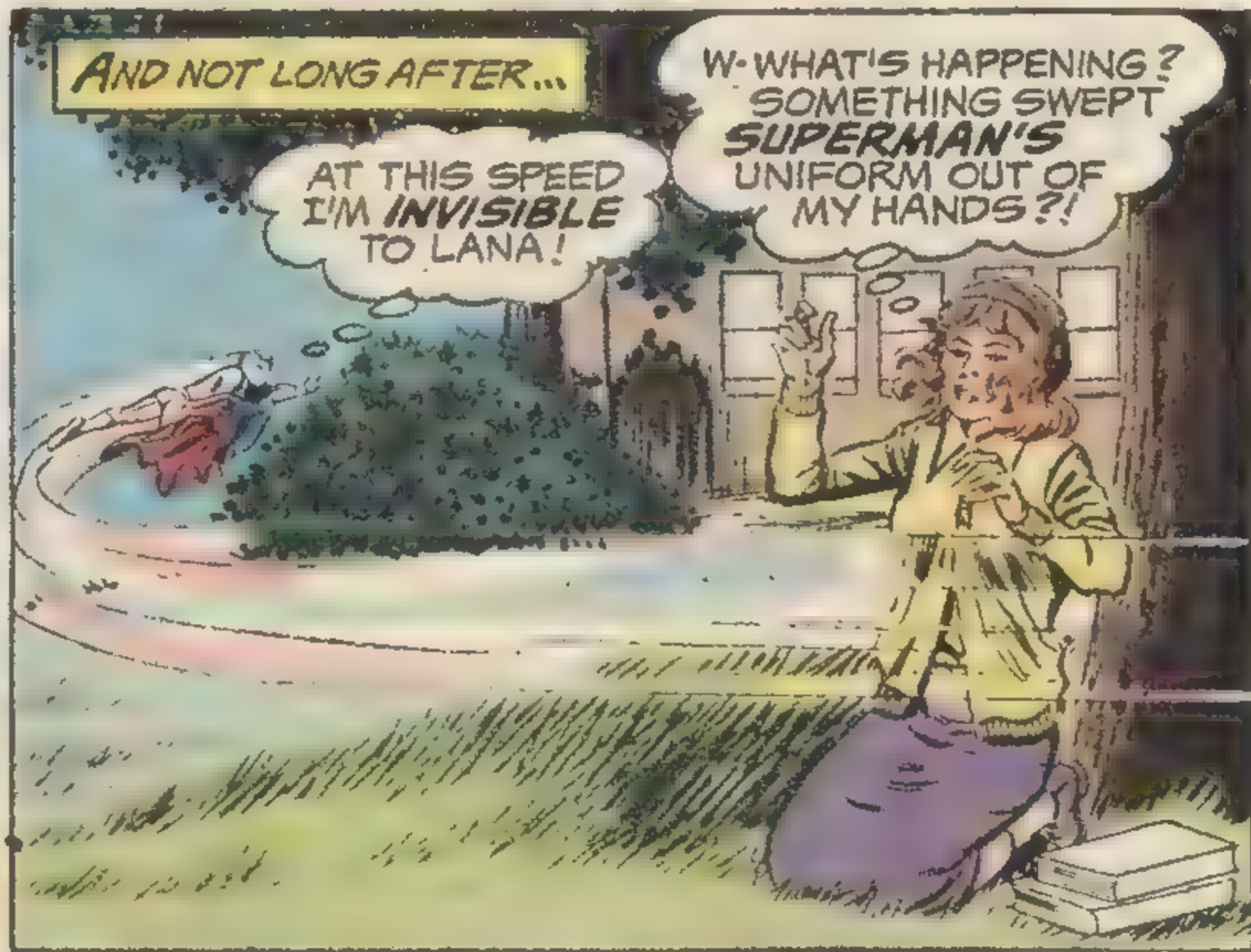
THE ONLY WAY I COULD POSE AS CLARK KENT WITHOUT REMOVING THE INSULATED UNIFORM WAS TO CREATE LIFE-LIKE **HAND-GLOVES** AND A **HEAD-MASK**...

...FORMED OUT OF PLASTIC SIMULATED TO LOOK LIKE **FLESH!**

BUT MY DAYS AS CLARK MAY BE **OVER** IF LANA FOUND MY **SUPERMAN** UNIFORM!



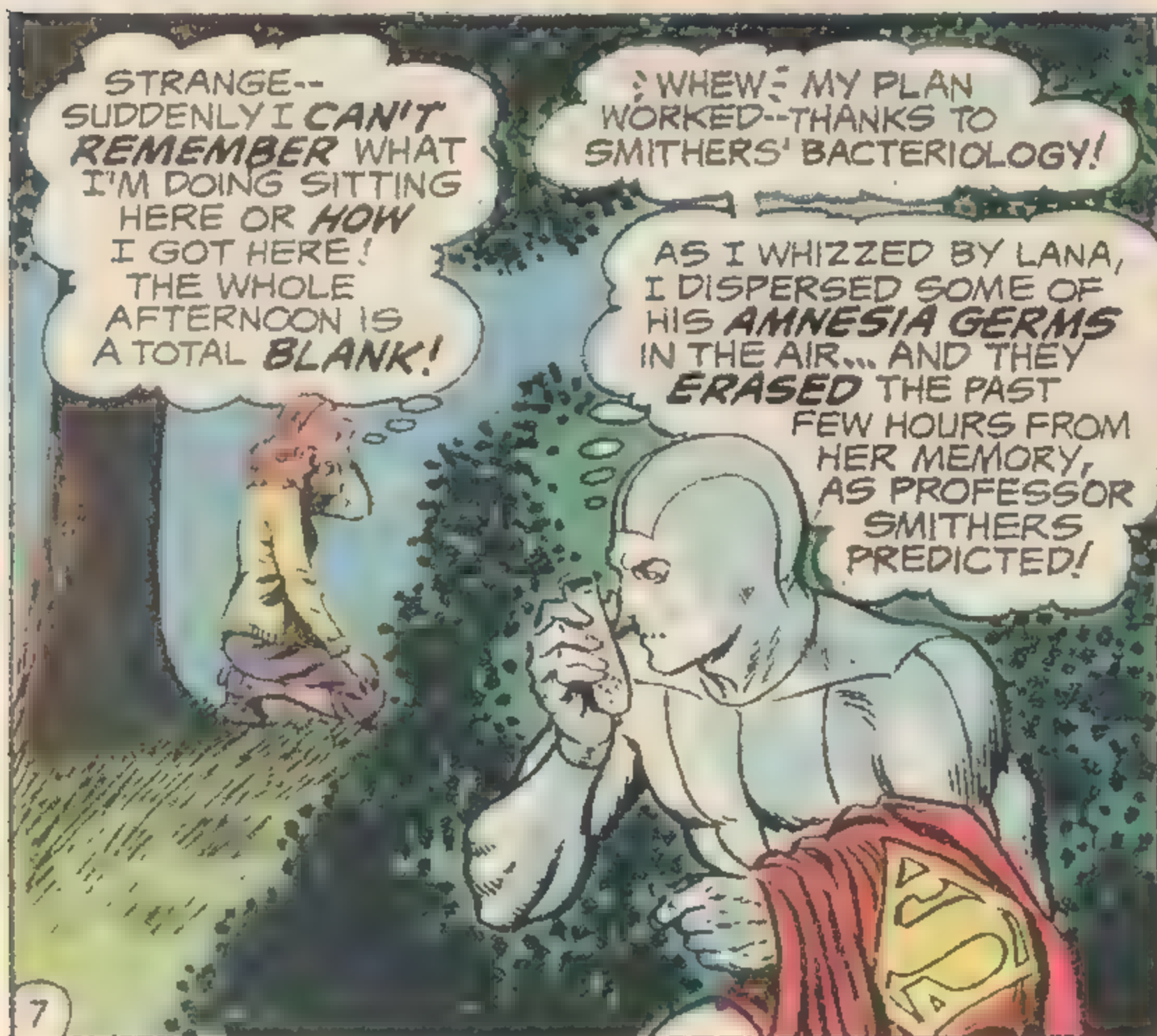
BEFORE I TRACK HER DOWN, I'LL STOP BY SMITHERS' LAB! HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP ME OUT OF THIS FIX!



AND NOT LONG AFTER...

AT THIS SPEED I'M **INVISIBLE** TO LANA!

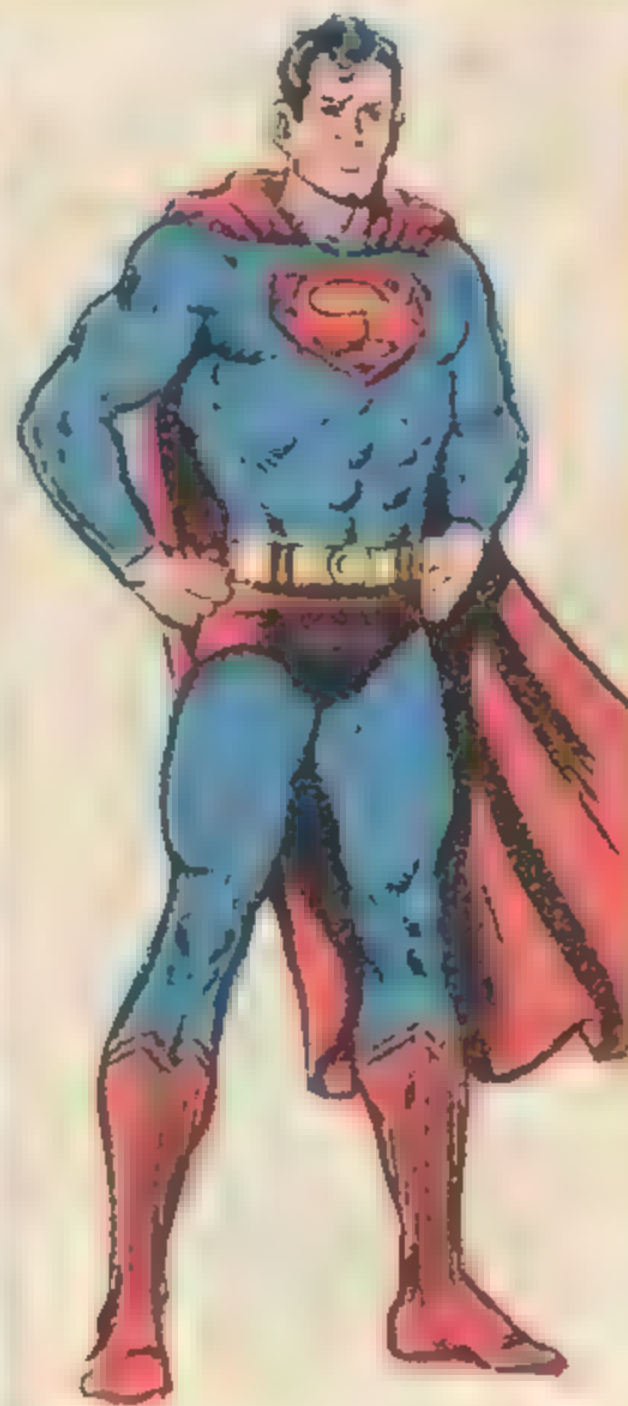
W-WHAT'S HAPPENING? SOMETHING SWEPT **SUPERMAN'S** UNIFORM OUT OF MY HANDS?!



STRANGE--SUDDENLY I **CAN'T REMEMBER** WHAT I'M DOING SITTING HERE OR **HOW** I GOT HERE! THE WHOLE AFTERNOON IS A TOTAL **BLANK!**

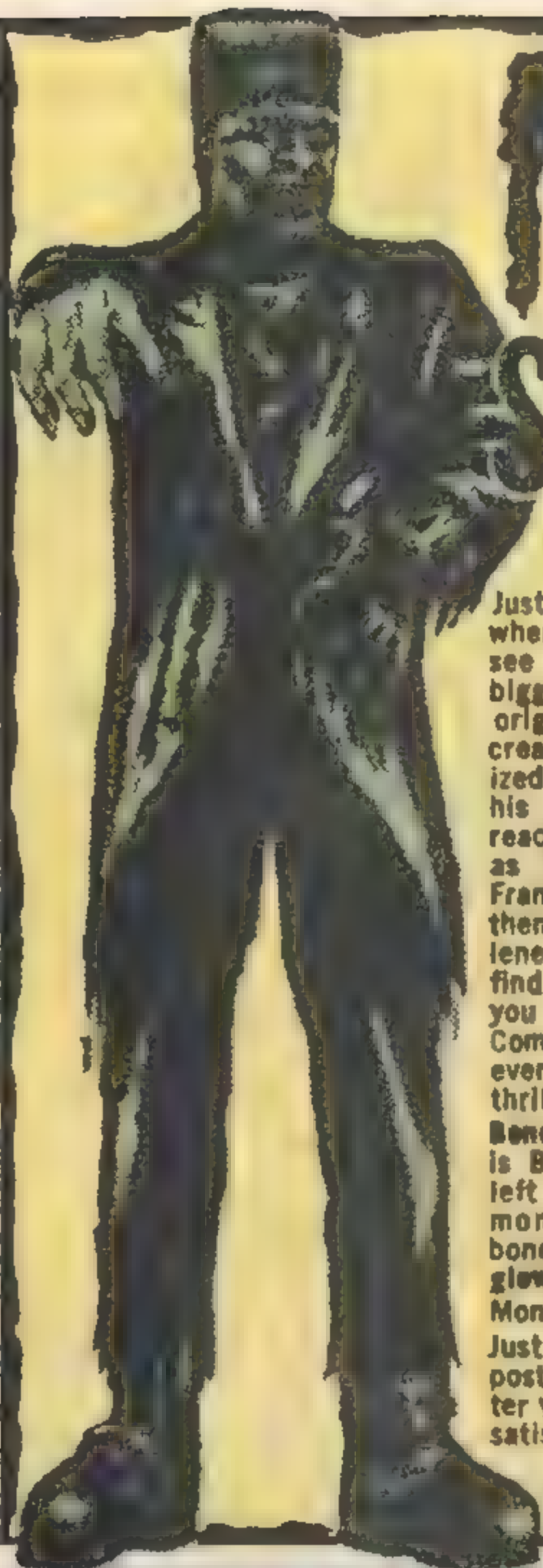
WHEW--MY PLAN WORKED--THANKS TO SMITHERS' BACTERIOLOGY!

AS I WHIZZED BY LANA, I DISPERSED SOME OF HIS **AMNESIA GERMS** IN THE AIR... AND THEY **ERASED** THE PAST FEW HOURS FROM HER MEMORY, AS PROFESSOR SMITHERS PREDICTED!



BUT THE NEXT DAY, **SUPERMAN** RETURNED TO NORMAL AND HE DROPPED HIS **OWN** UNIFORM ONCE MORE! AND THUS, LIKE A PASSING COMET THAT FLASHES ACROSS THE SKY AND NEVER REAPPEARS, THE MYSTERIOUS **SUPER-X** WAS NEVER TO BE SEEN AGAIN!

The End



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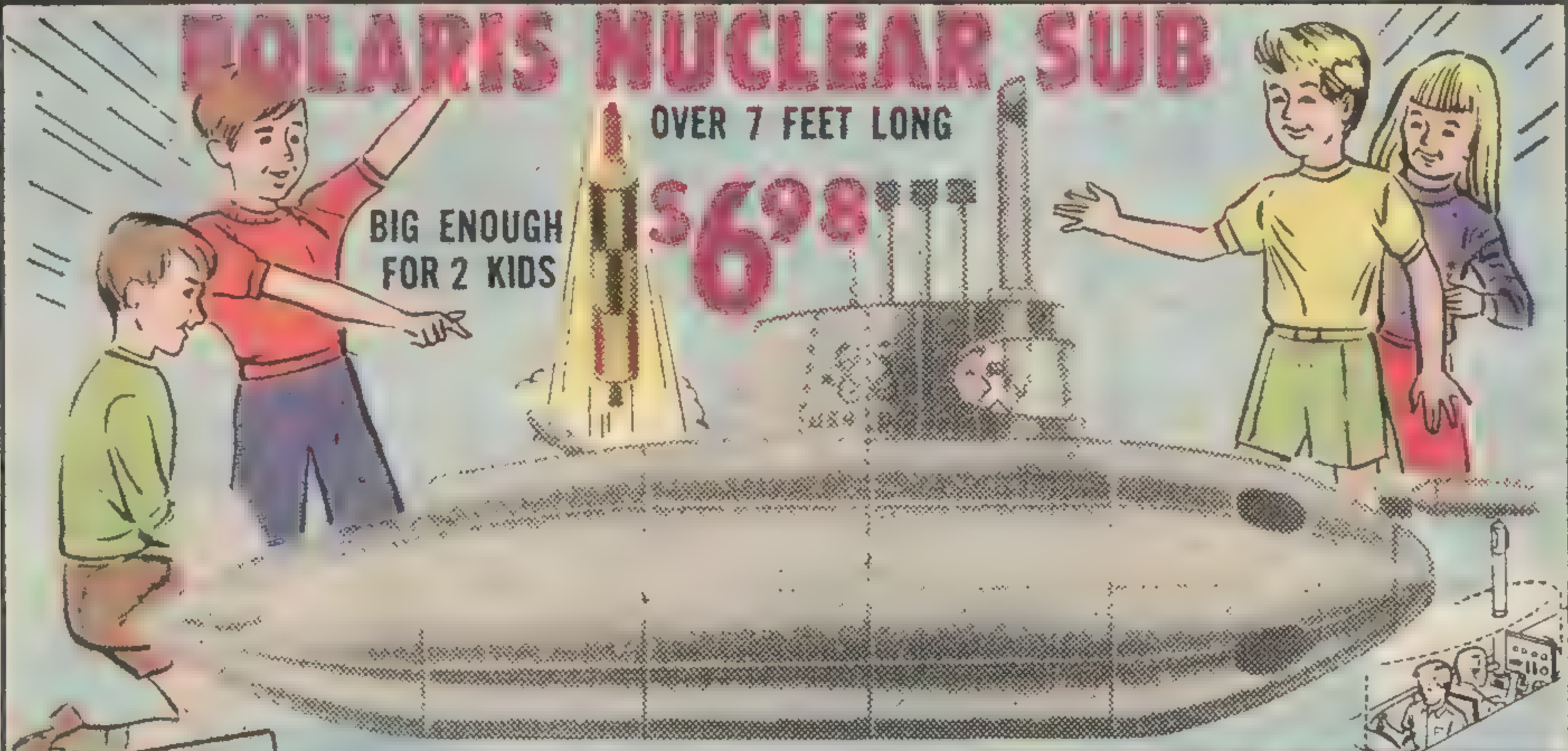
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B-179

The **ATOM**

YOU MIGHT AS
WELL GIVE UP,
ATOM! THERE'S
NO ESCAPE
FROM ME!

NO MATTER WHERE I GO--MY
PHANTOM TWIN CAN ALWAYS
MATERIALIZE BESIDE ME! AND
TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, IF
I HARM HIM--I'LL ONLY HARM
MYSELF THE SAME WAY!

HE WAS BORN IN THE SWIRLING
MATRIX OF A NUCLEAR ERUPTION--
A DUPLICATE RAY PALMER
AND THE ATOM!
HE HAD A PHANTOM-LIKE LIFE--
BUT PREFERRED THE REAL--
LIFE EXISTENCE OF RAY (ATOM)
PALMER!
HE WOULD STOP AT NOTHING
TO TURN THE REAL MAN INTO
THE PHANTOM--AND HIMSELF
BECOME THE LIVING, BREATHING
HUMAN BEING!
HIS POWERS WERE SO
INCREDIBLE THAT THERE
APPEARED TO BE NO ESCAPE
FROM...

The **ATOM'S PHANTOM DOUBLE!**

STORY BY
GARDNER
FOX

ART BY
GIL KANE
&
MURPHY
ANDERSON

AS RESEARCH SCIENTIST RAY (ATOM) PALMER WORKS ON A SMALL ATOMIC MOTOR IN HIS IVY UNIVERSITY LABORATORY...

HMMMM--THE REACTOR GAUGES ARE REGISTERING FAR TOO HIGH AN OUTPUT OF WASTE RADIOACTIVITY! I'D BETTER LOWER THE ENERGY INPUT.



BUT EVEN AS HE REACHES FOR THE CONTROL LEVERS...

GOOD GOSH! THE DYNAMOS AT THE ELECTRIC COMPANY MUST HAVE SHORT-CIRCUITED AND FED A FANTASTIC AMOUNT OF POWER INTO MY COILS! IT'S THE ONLY WAY I CAN ACCOUNT FOR THAT WEIRD GLOW! I'LL SHUT OFF THE...



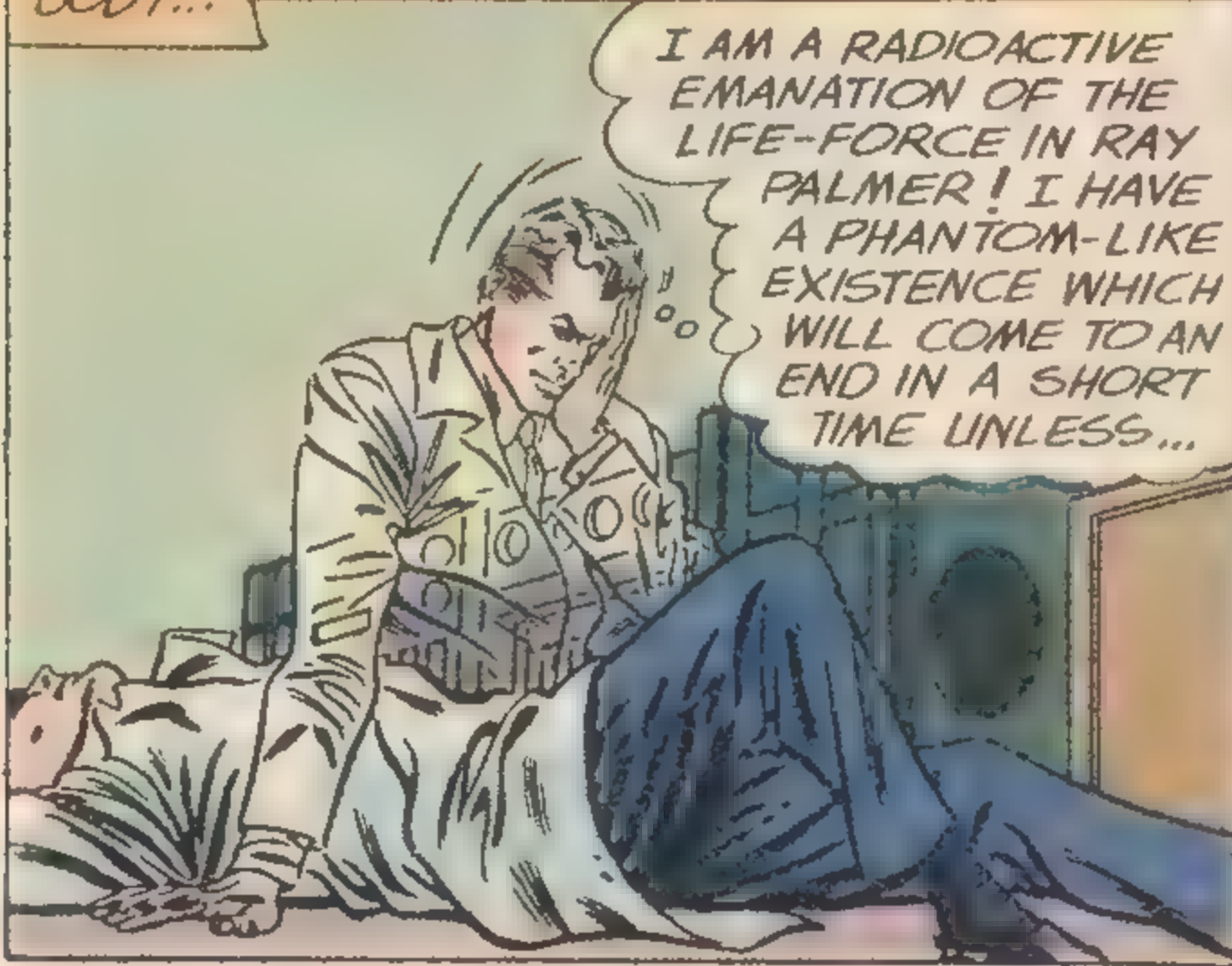
AS THE SUPER-POWERED VOLTS FLOOD THROUGH THE TINY MOTOR CORE...

WAYS SO STRONG... I'M LOSING CONSCIOUSNESS...



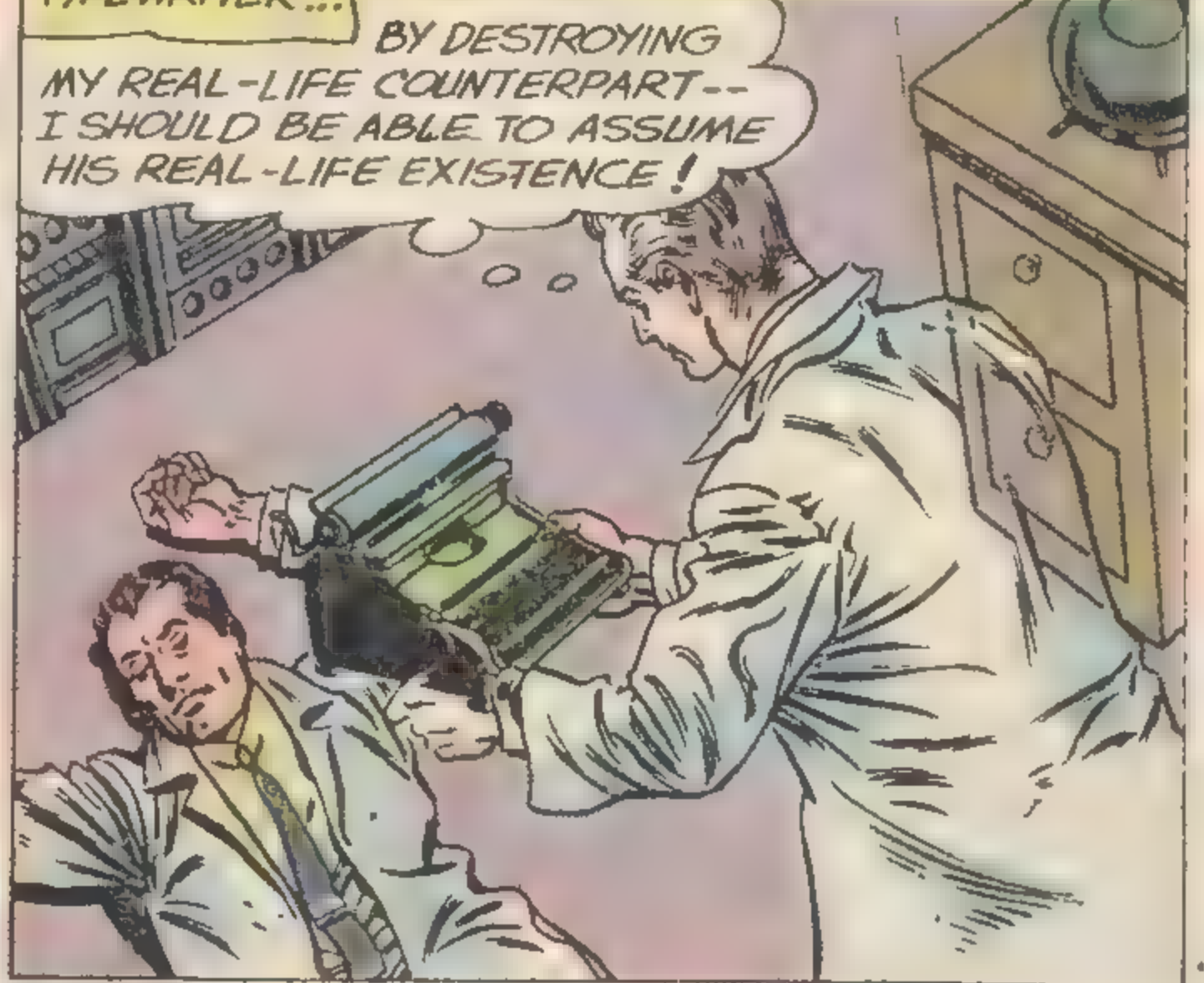
FOR LONG MOMENTS THE YOUNG NUCLEAR PHYSICIST LIES UNCONSCIOUS. THEN, SLOWLY, A STRANGE GHOSTLY FIGURE RISES UPWARD FROM HIS BODY...

I AM A RADIOACTIVE EMANATION OF THE LIFE-FORCE IN RAY PALMER! I HAVE A PHANTOM-LIKE EXISTENCE WHICH WILL COME TO AN END IN A SHORT TIME UNLESS...



PHANTOM HANDS STRETCH OUT TO LIFT A HEAVY TYPEWRITER...

BY DESTROYING MY REAL-LIFE COUNTERPART-- I SHOULD BE ABLE TO ASSUME HIS REAL-LIFE EXISTENCE!



RAY OPENS HIS EYES JUST IN TIME TO SEE...

A TYPEWRITER-- HURTLING DOWN AT ME!



DESPERATELY REACTING TO THAT MENACING SIGHT, RAY ROLLS OVER AND OVER...

THE RELEASE OF POWER MUST HAVE JARRED THE TYPEWRITER OFF THE TABLE WHERE I WAS MAKING MY NOTES!

CRASH!

AS THE SCIENTIST GETS TO HIS FEET...

I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF SIGHT... FIGURE OUT WHAT I CAN BEST DO TO REPLACE HIM! I ACTED ON IMPULSE BEFORE-- I REALIZE NOW THAT MY ALTER EGO MUST NOT DIE... NOT JUST YET...

UNAWARE OF HIS PHANTOM TWIN, RAY PALMER IS STRAIGHTENING UP THE DAMAGE WHEN HIS TELEPHONE RINGS...

HELLO? THE POLICE? WHAT'S THAT? OH, GREAT! THIS IS MY UNLUCKY DAY, ALL RIGHT! SOMEBODY'S JUST STOLEN SOME EQUIPMENT BEING SHIPPED BY TRUCK TO MY LAB?

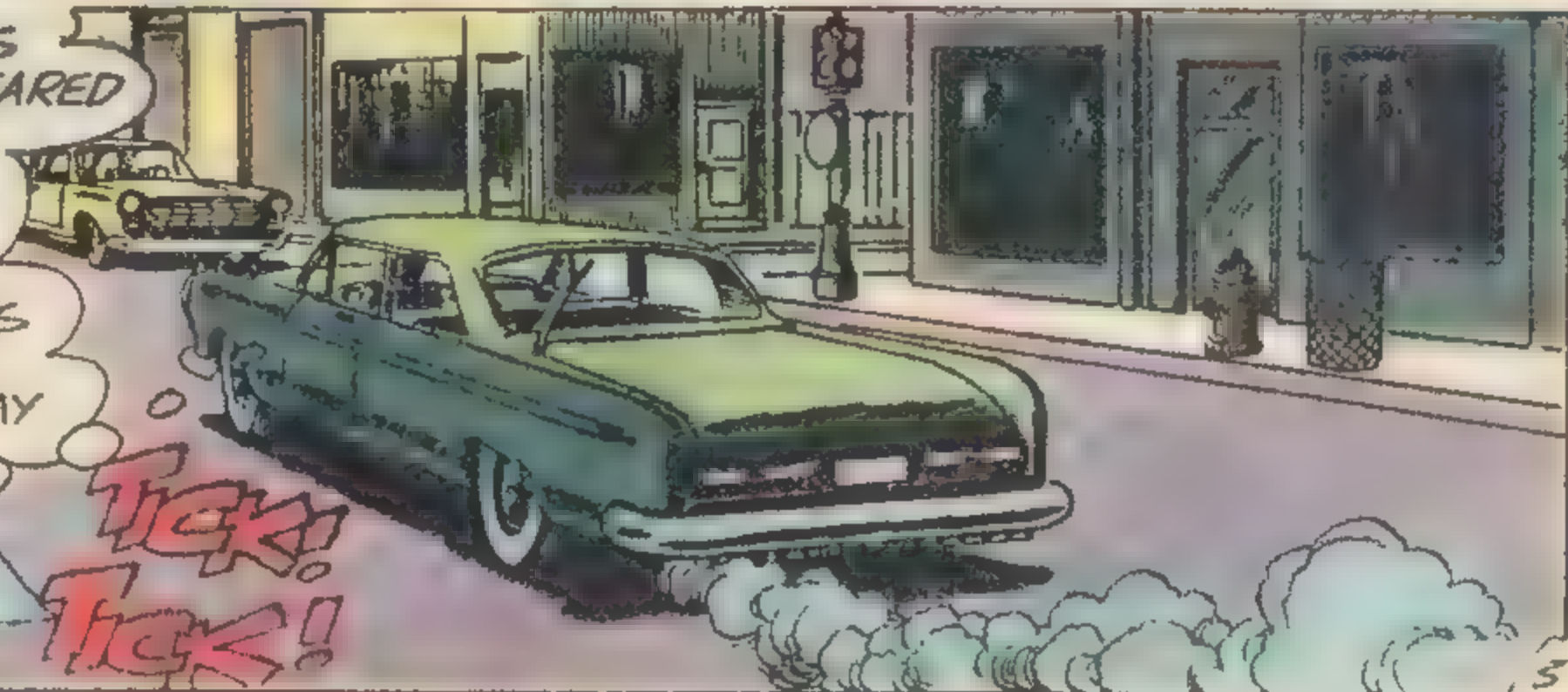
I'LL BE RIGHT OUT WITH A RADIATION DETECTOR THAT MAY HELP TO LOCATE THE STOLEN ARTICLES! ON ROUTE 12 NEAR CLYDESDALE? GOT IT!

GOOD! WHILE HE'S GONE I CAN WORK OUT MY PROBLEM-- GET TO UNDERSTAND IT BETTER AND FIGURE OUT SOME WAY BY WHICH I CAN TAKE OVER "MY" BODY!



AN HOUR LATER AS RAY DRIVES SLOWLY THROUGH THE VILLAGE OF CLYDESDALE...

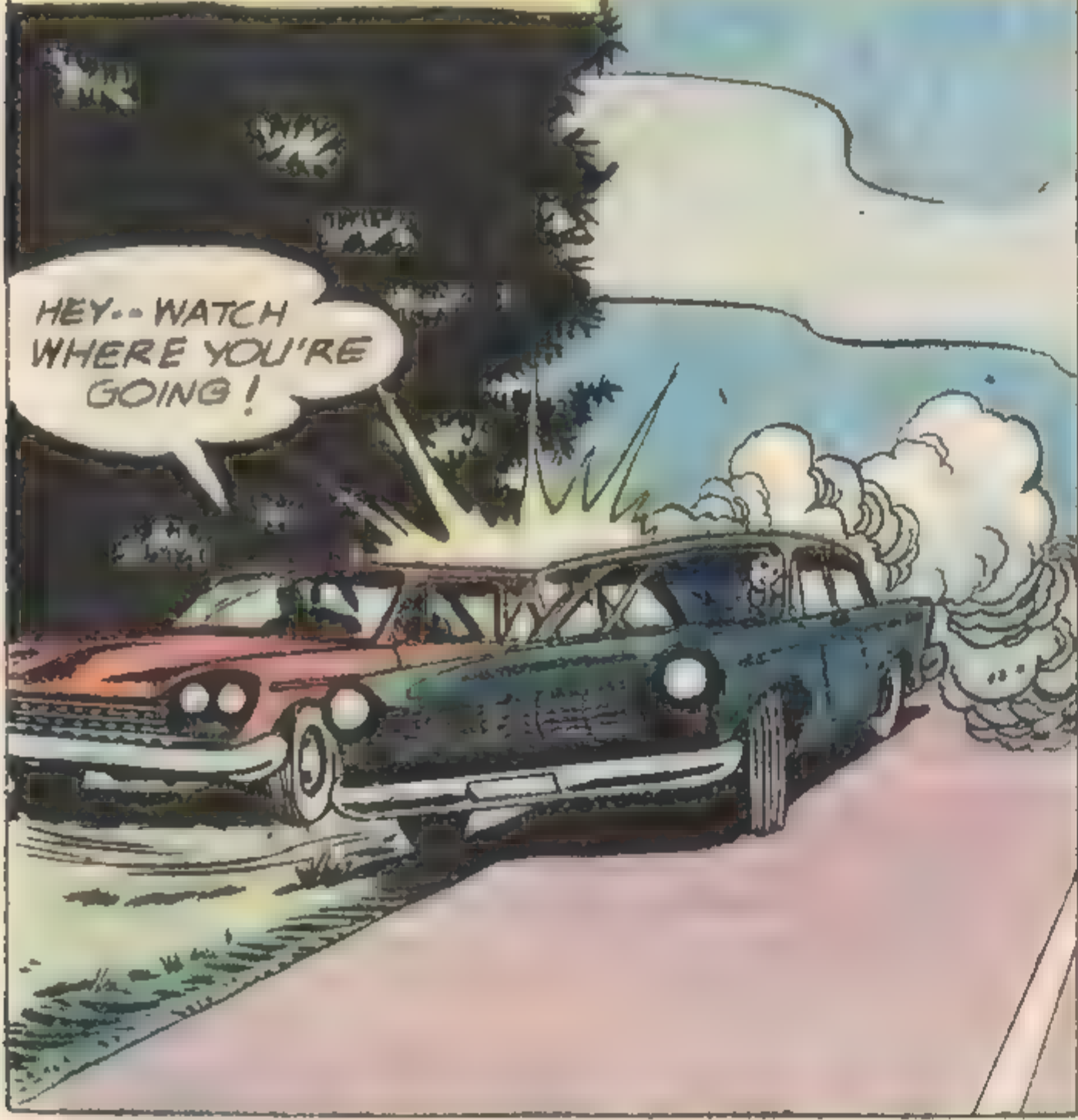
HUH? MY DETECTOR'S WORKING! IT'S SO GEARED THAT IT WON'T WORK EXCEPT WHEN IT'S NEAR THE STOLEN EQUIPMENT! THAT MEANS--THE THIEVES ARE VERY CLOSE BY--COMING IN MY DIRECTION!



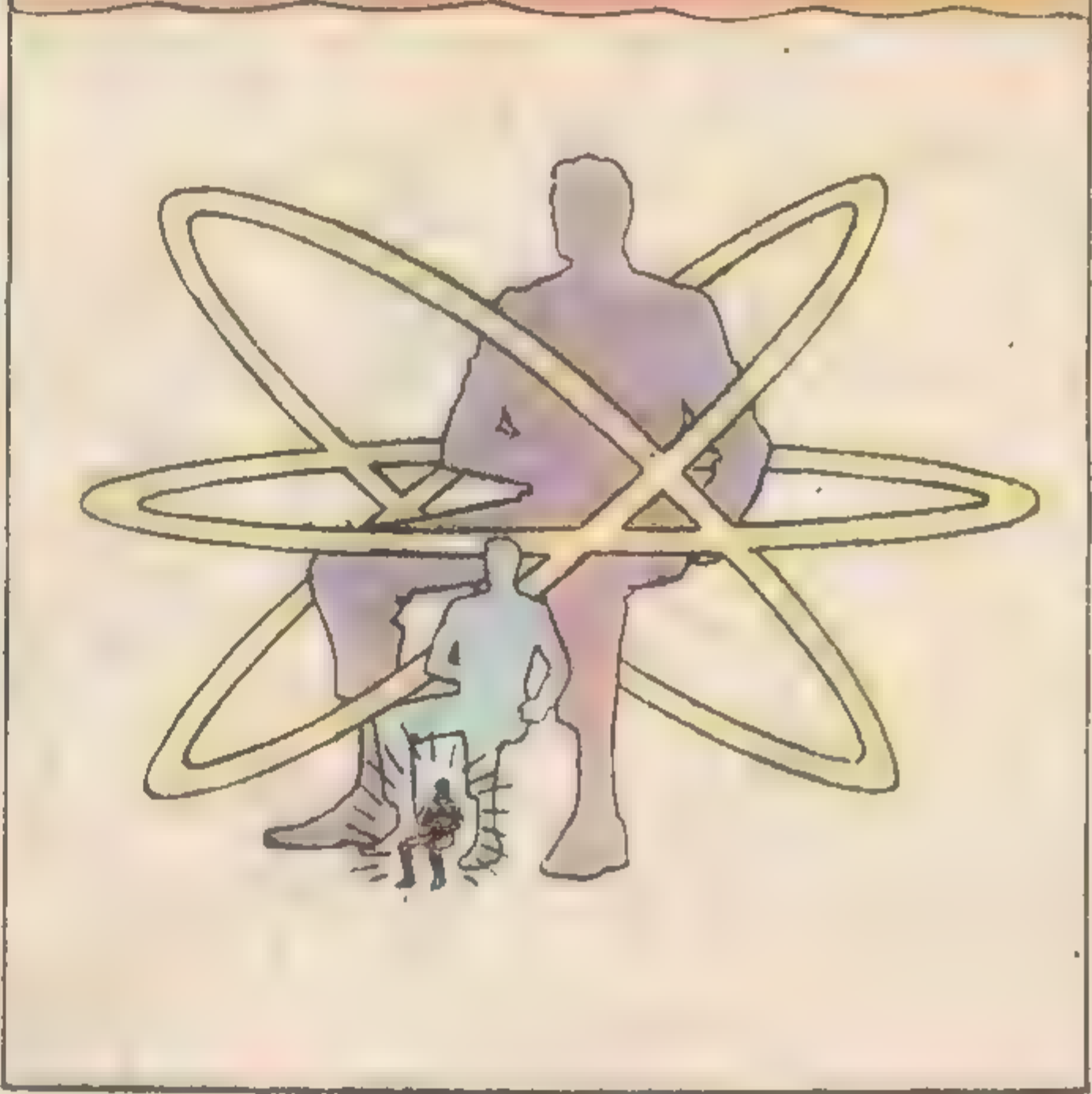


*Editor's Note: AN APPLICATION OF THE **DOPPLER EFFECT**--IN WHICH THE PITCH OF SOUND CHANGES AS THE DISTANCE BETWEEN THE SOUND-SOURCE AND RECEIVER CHANGES.

OUT ONTO A LONELY COUNTRY ROAD HE TRAILS THE STATION WAGON, THEN...



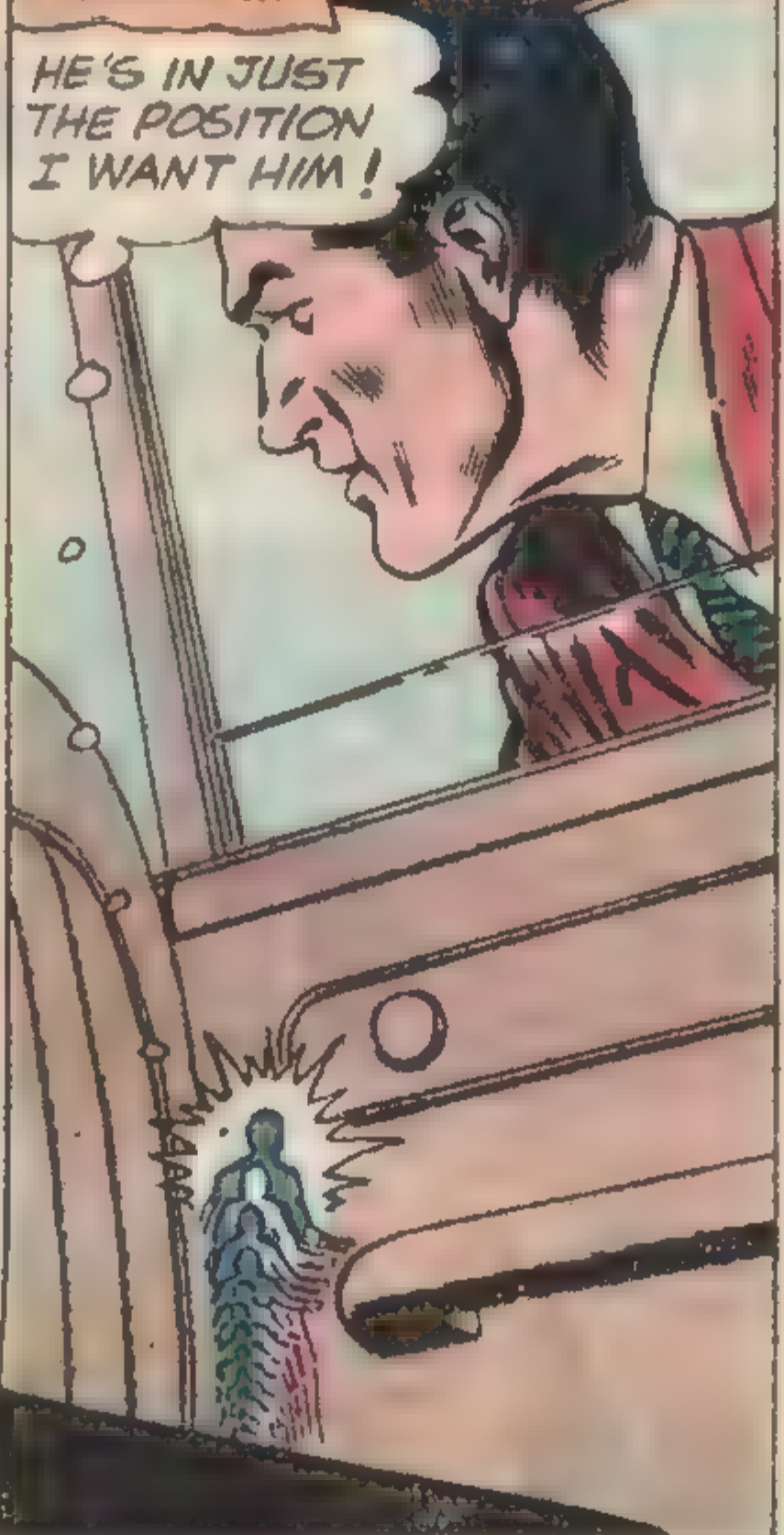
A HAND DARTS TO THE SIZE-AND-WEIGHT CONTROL OF HIS UNIFORM, AND RAY PALMER BECOMES HIS OTHER SELF, THE ATOM!...



A SURPRISED STATION WAGON DRIVER CRIES OUT IN SURPRISE AS...



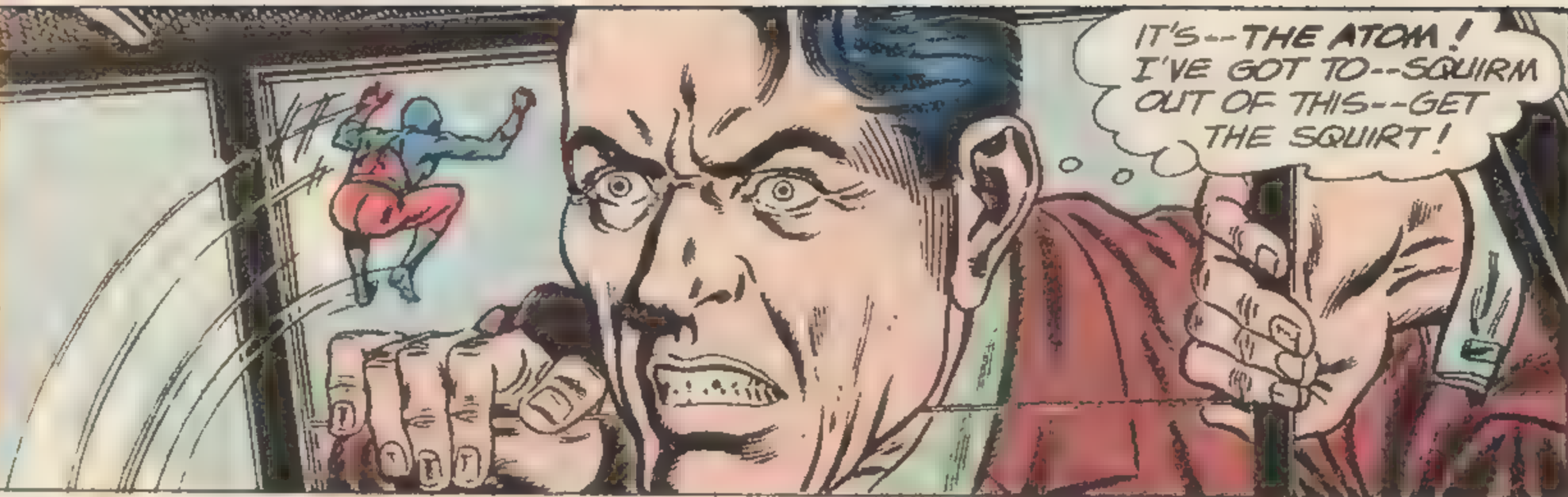
BELDW HIM, ON THE CAR SEAT, A TINY DOT GROWS LARGER.. LARGER...



WITH CLENCHED FISTS, THE TINY TITAN HITS THE ELECTRIC WINDOW CONTROL BUTTON AND...



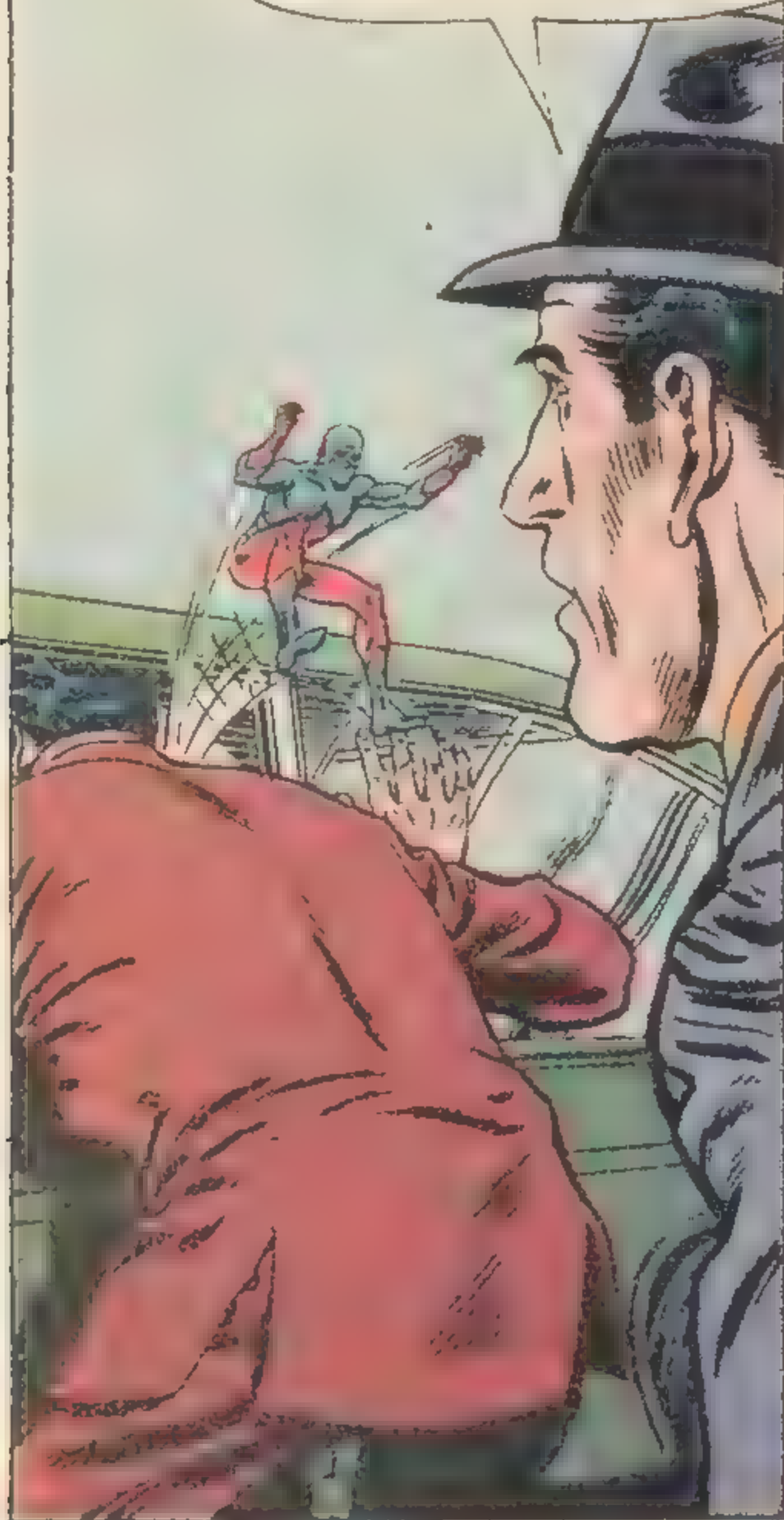
USING THE SEAT OF THE CAR AS A SPRING-BOARD, THE ATOM BOUNDS PAST THE HELPLESS CRIMINAL INTO OPEN SPACE...



IT'S--THE ATOM! I'VE GOT TO--SQUIRM OUT OF THIS--GET THE SQUIRT!

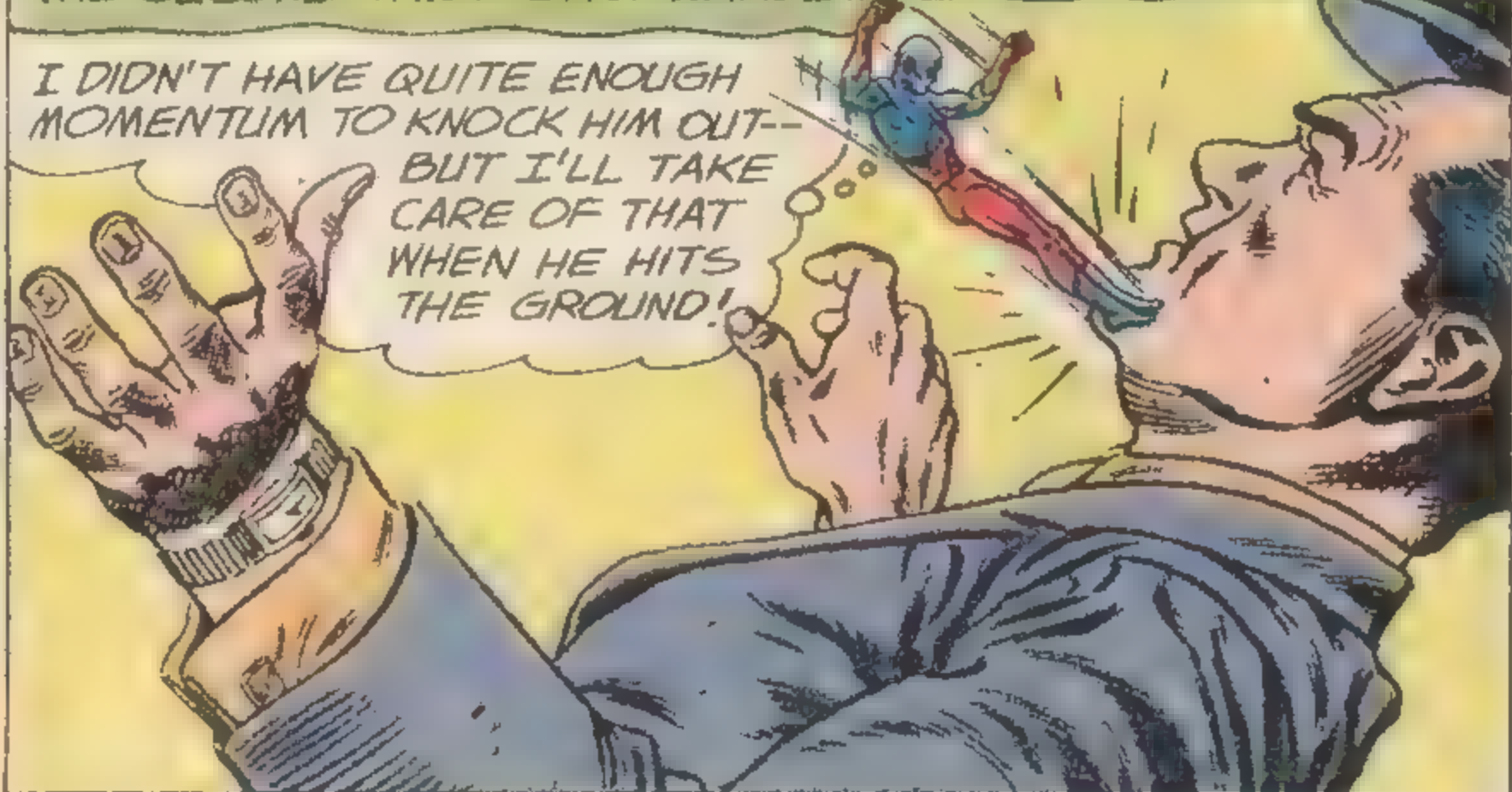
THE MIGHTY MITE SPRINGS UP AND OUTWARD SO SWIFTLY THAT...

AM I SEEING SPOTS BEFORE MY EYES--?



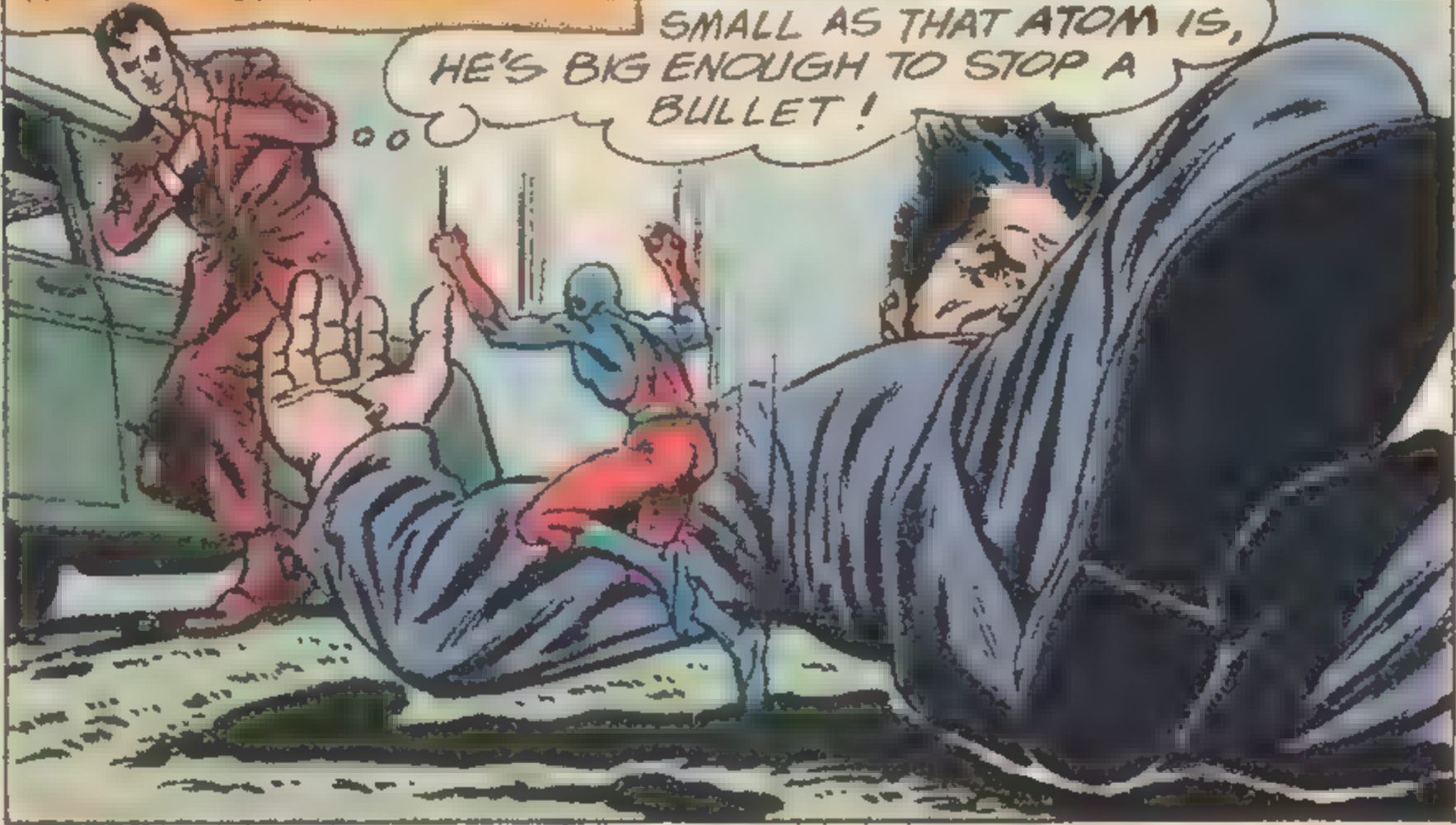
LANDING HARD WITH BOTH TINY FEET, THE ATOM DRIVES THE SECOND THIEF BACKWARDS...

I DIDN'T HAVE QUITE ENOUGH MOMENTUM TO KNOCK HIM OUT-- BUT I'LL TAKE CARE OF THAT WHEN HE HITS THE GROUND!



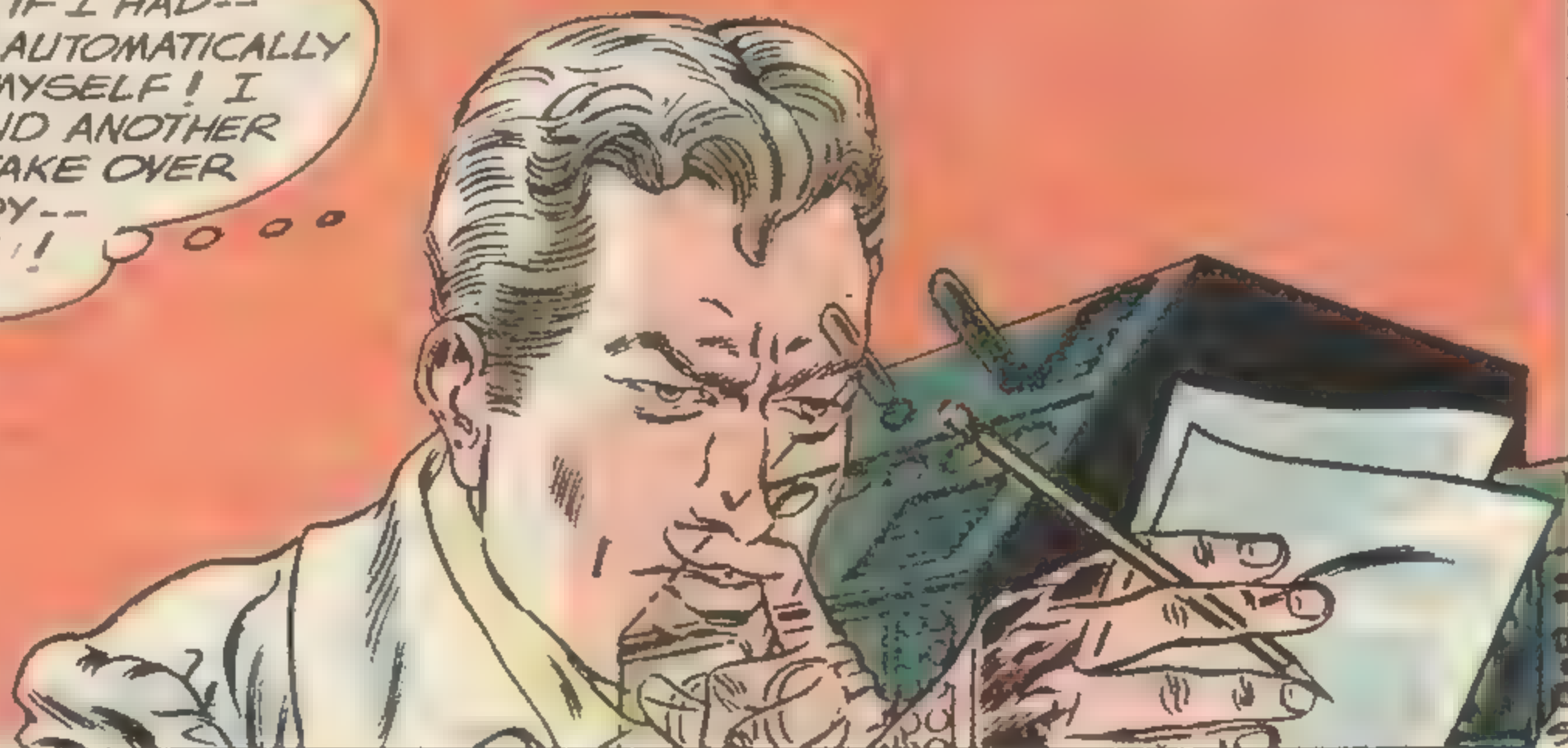
AS THE CRIMINAL HITS THE ROAD, THE ATOM DROPS BESIDE HIM--JUST AS THE OTHER CROOK FREES HIMSELF FROM THE CAR WINDOW VISE...

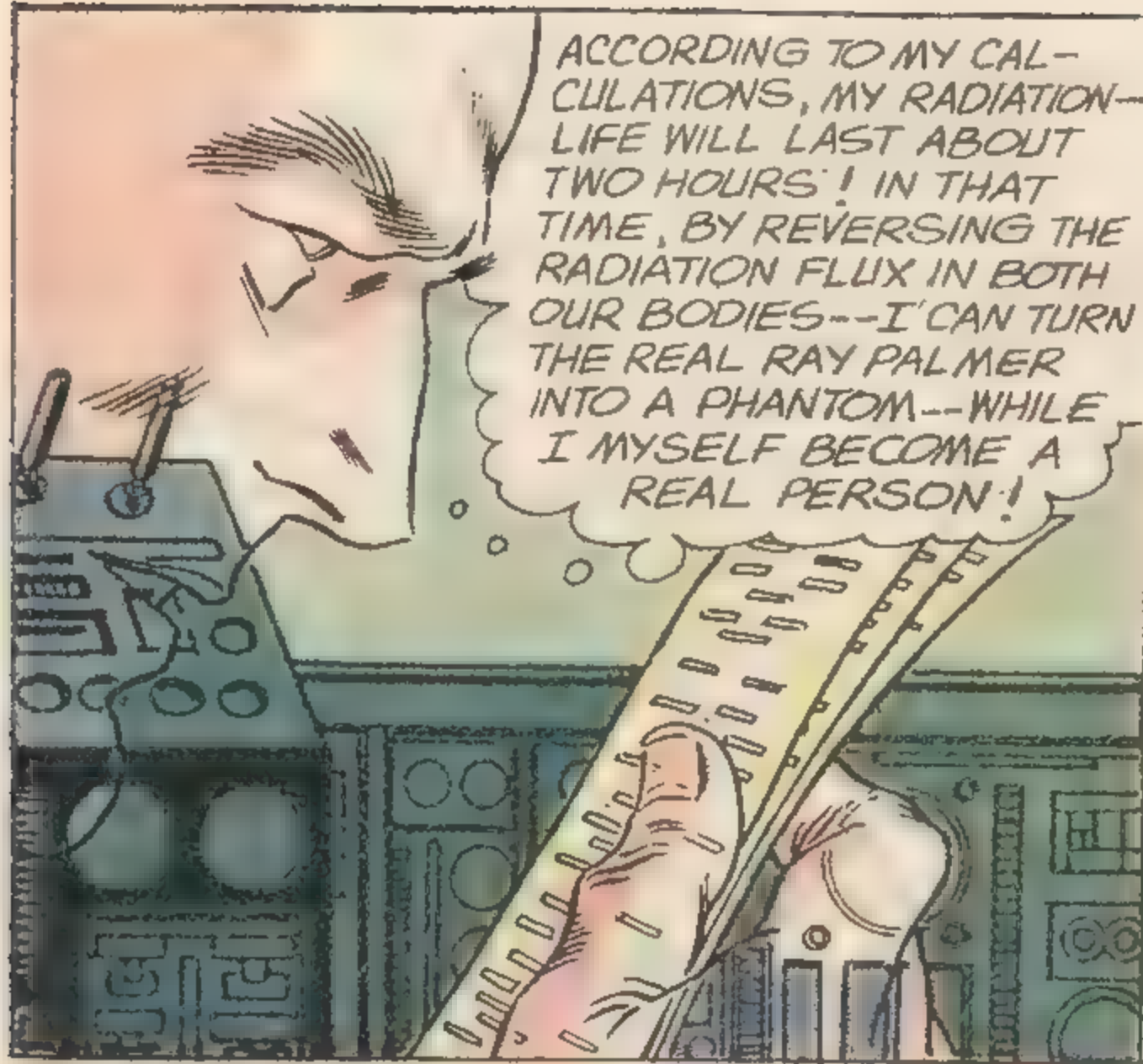
SMALL AS THAT ATOM IS, HE'S BIG ENOUGH TO STOP A BULLET!



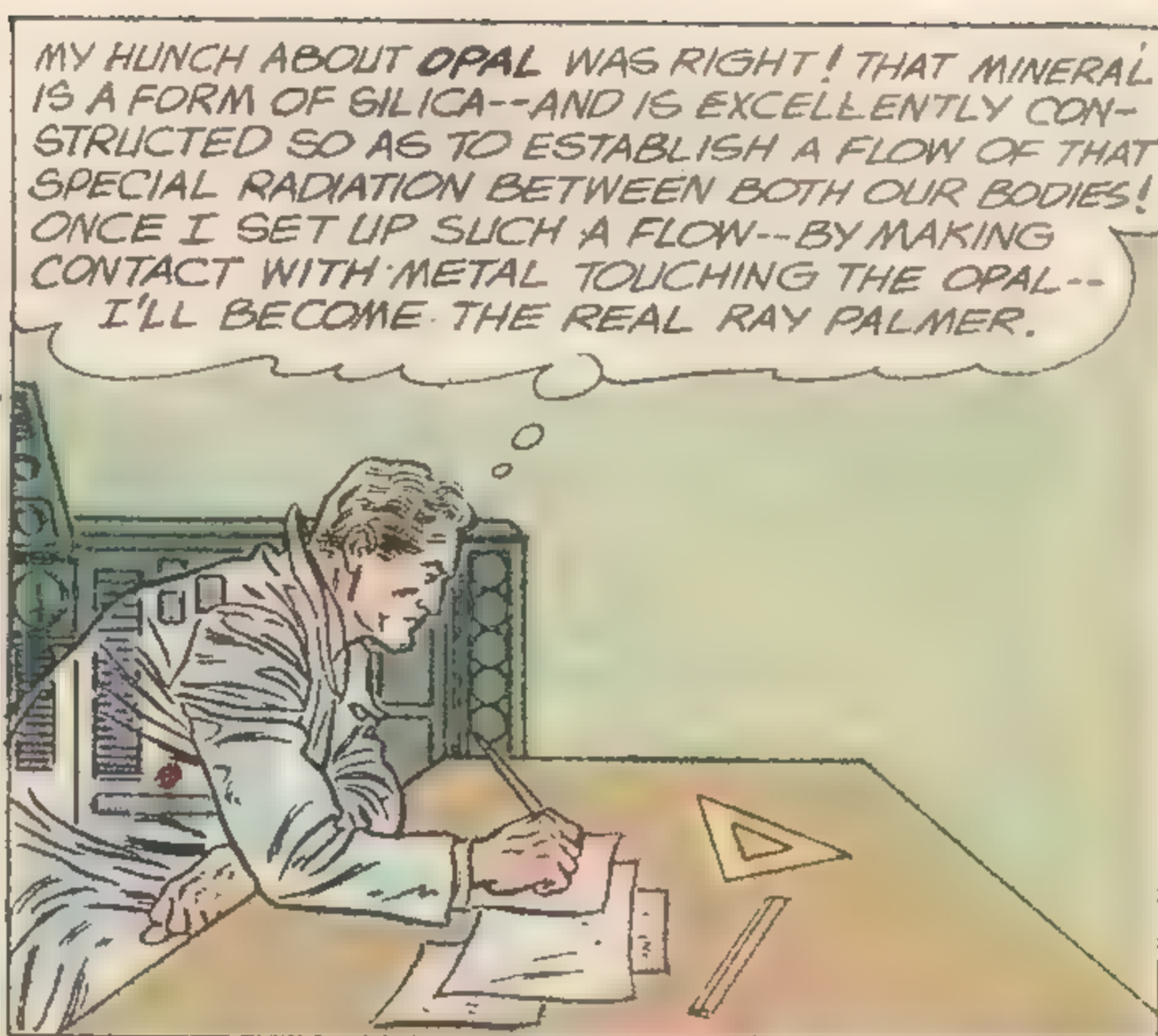
MEANWHILE, SOME DISTANCE AWAY, IN THE RESEARCH LABORATORIES OF IVY UNIVERSITY...

I'M GLAD NOW THAT I DIDN'T KILL RAY PALMER! IF I HAD-- I'D HAVE AUTOMATICALLY KILLED MYSELF! I MUST FIND ANOTHER WAY TO TAKE OVER HIS BODY-- SAFELY!!

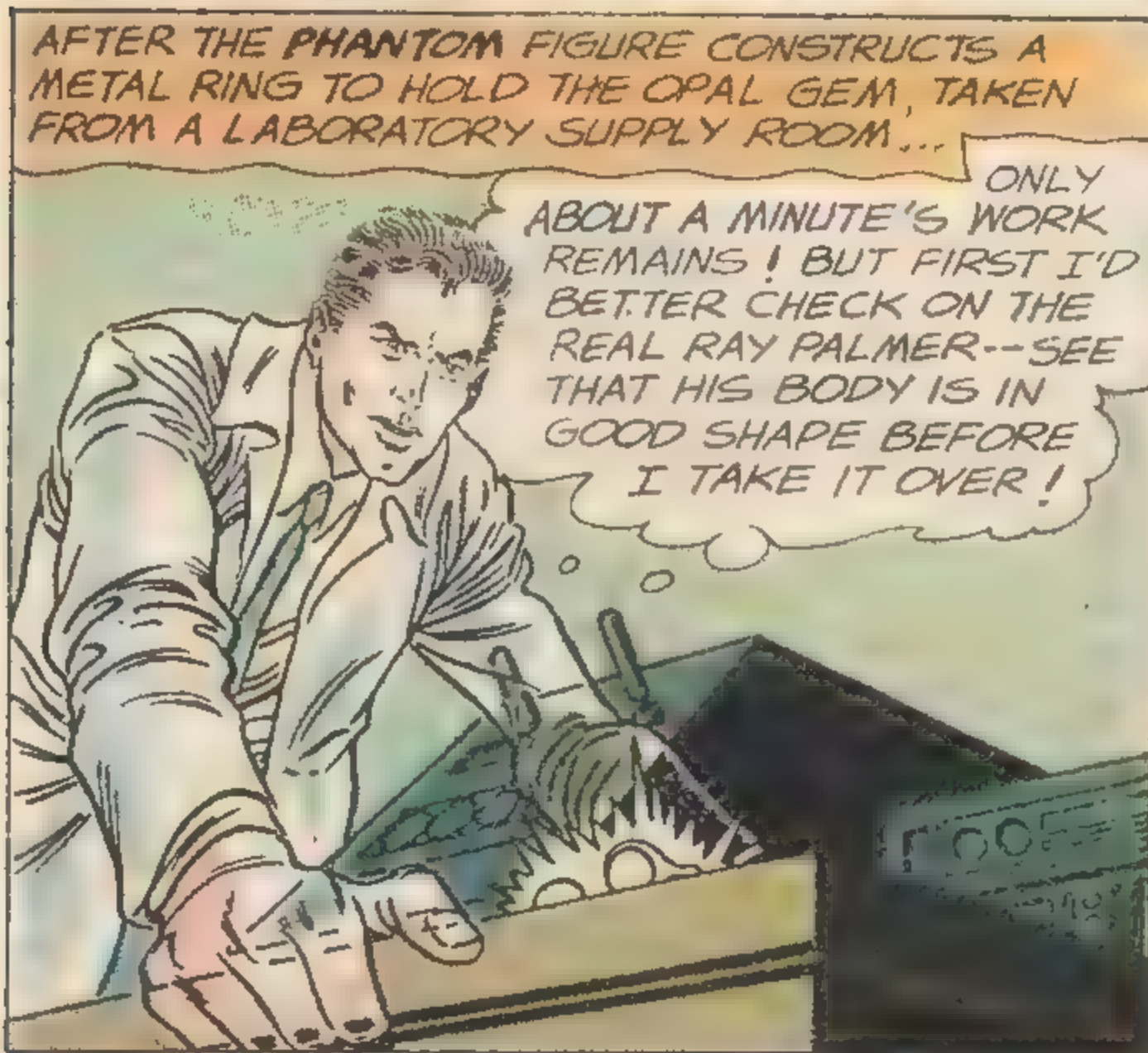




ACCORDING TO MY CALCULATIONS, MY RADIATION-LIFE WILL LAST ABOUT TWO HOURS! IN THAT TIME, BY REVERSING THE RADIATION FLUX IN BOTH OUR BODIES--I CAN TURN THE REAL RAY PALMER INTO A PHANTOM--WHILE I MYSELF BECOME A REAL PERSON!

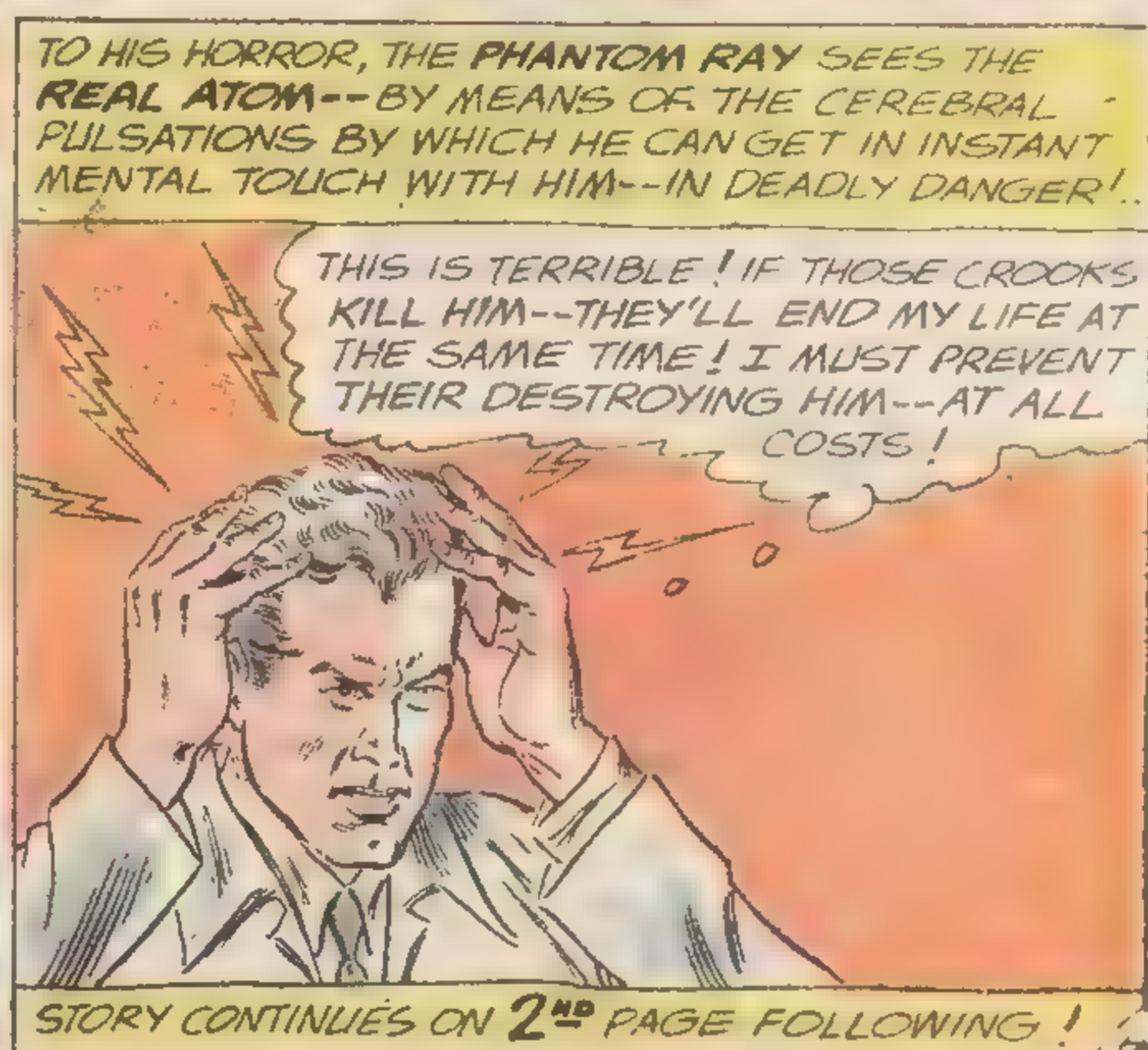


MY HUNCH ABOUT OPAL WAS RIGHT! THAT MINERAL IS A FORM OF SILICA--AND IS EXCELLENTLY CONSTRUCTED SO AS TO ESTABLISH A FLOW OF THAT SPECIAL RADIATION BETWEEN BOTH OUR BODIES! ONCE I SET UP SUCH A FLOW--BY MAKING CONTACT WITH METAL TOUCHING THE OPAL--I'LL BECOME THE REAL RAY PALMER.



AFTER THE PHANTOM FIGURE CONSTRUCTS A METAL RING TO HOLD THE OPAL GEM, TAKEN FROM A LABORATORY SUPPLY ROOM...

ONLY ABOUT A MINUTE'S WORK REMAINS! BUT FIRST I'D BETTER CHECK ON THE REAL RAY PALMER--SEE THAT HIS BODY IS IN GOOD SHAPE BEFORE I TAKE IT OVER!



TO HIS HORROR, THE PHANTOM RAY SEES THE REAL ATOM--BY MEANS OF THE CEREBRAL PULSATIONS BY WHICH HE CAN GET IN INSTANT MENTAL TOUCH WITH HIM--IN DEADLY DANGER!

THIS IS TERRIBLE! IF THOSE CROOKS KILL HIM--THEY'LL END MY LIFE AT THE SAME TIME! I MUST PREVENT THEIR DESTROYING HIM--AT ALL COSTS!

STORY CONTINUES ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING!

ON SALE
NOV 23RD

ONE TO STARTLE YOU...

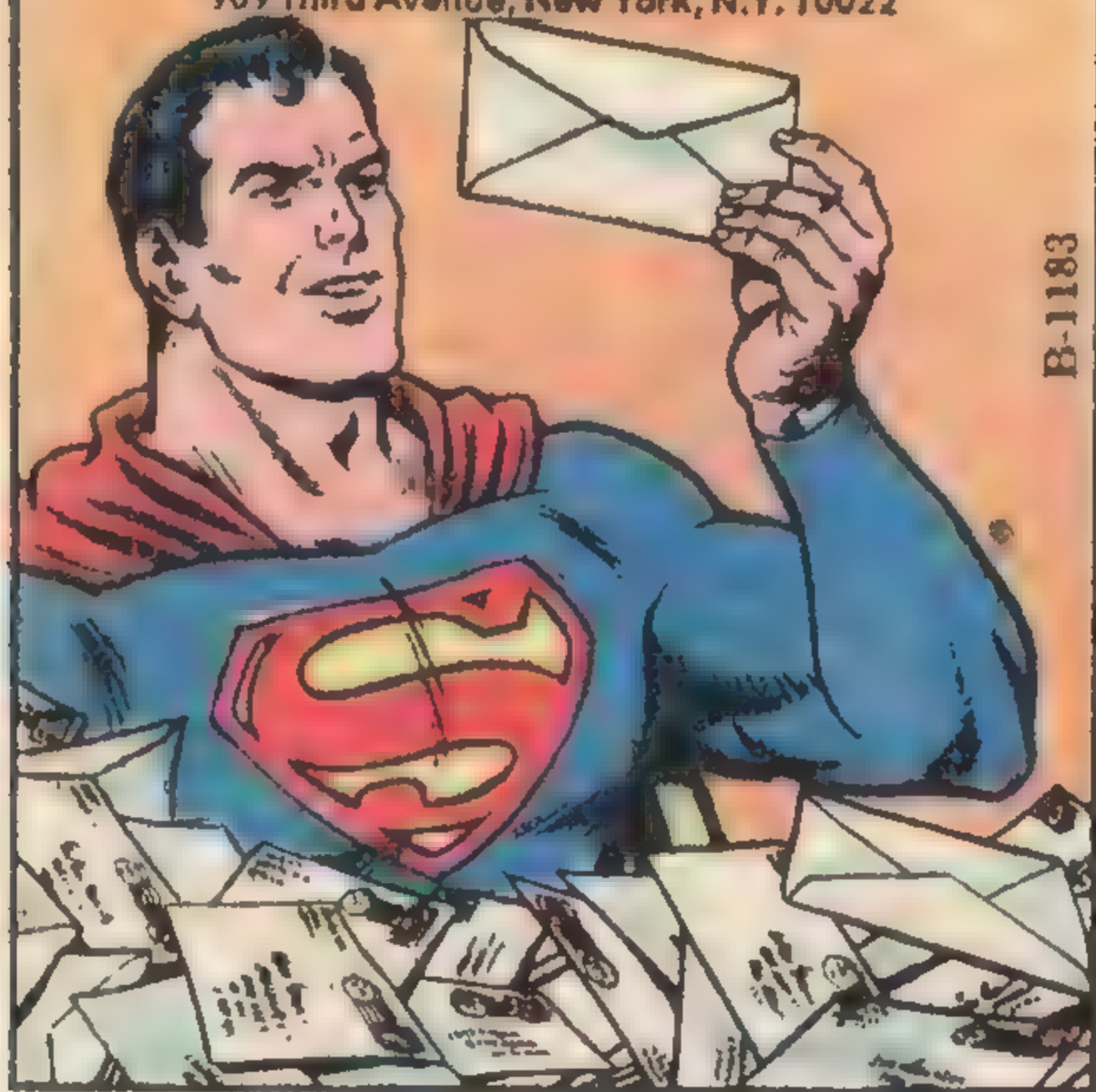
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Dear Editor:

I didn't mean to put Leo Dorfman down in my last letter to ACTION, but Cary Bates did such a superb job I felt he deserved a pat on the back.

Now, in #404, Leo has produced two winners. While they can't top the Bates tale of #403, they out-class Leo's own yarn in the last issue. Of course, the general plot of the stolen powers has been done before, but not quite the way it should have been. In this story, you could feel Superman's anxiety over losing his powers, and his determination not to let them go. Then the ending wasn't the usual happily-ever-after conclusion, but one that projected a mild lesson, combined with a hint of foreshadowing.

As for the art—well, the only three worthwhile inkers for Swan are Anderson, Adkins and Swan himself. Please keep Anderson inking Swan's pencils.

The Atom and Aquaman reprints were fair, but not anywhere near as good as the two Dorfman stories. Question: who did the story and art for the Aquaman reprint?

All that is left to comment on is the cover. It was fine. Neal Adams did a good job.

Now that all you people responsible for #404 have read this, stop gloating and get back to work!

Mark Lucke, Beeville, Tex.

Not before we answer your question—as best we can. Unfortunately, we have no record of who wrote that Aquaman tale, but the artist was Ramona Fradon.—Ed.

Dear Editor:

I wanted to tell you what a WONDERFUL job you did in ACTION COMICS #404. I was very happy to see the Atom story, "The Specter of 3,000 Moons Lake," because I think The Atom (both old and new versions) is one of the best super-heroes that DC has!

You know, it really fits: "A" for Atom, "A" for Action Comics and "A" for Aquaman (also in that issue). You could also use stories of the original Atom from the 1940's.

Thanks for The Atom. I hope ACTION #404 sells 1,000,000 copies.

Richard J. Kalina, El Paso, Tex.

That was quite a collection of A's. But where does Superman fit in? "A" for "A hero"?—Ed.

Dear Editor:

I wish Mr. Dorfman would not give us stories that are obviously dashed off, as in "Kneel to Your Conqueror, Superman!" First we meet a scientist who's SO brilliant he runs a computer with his brain-power. Then he starts to drain Superman's powers into himself. Nice, original idea, that . . . But does Mr. Dorfman stop there? No—he has to give us such imperishable dialogue as "I, Caesar, will rule the world" and "My arms! They're pulsing with super-strength!" Oh, and Caesar saved some parts from a damaged Superman robot, when we all know Supie wired them with a self-destruct switch, back in SUPERMAN #181, to prevent that very thing from happening.

But, now that I've shown displeasure over one story, I'd like to say that the other stories in this issue were very good.

Richard H. Morrissey, Framingham, Mass.

Well, despite your dislike for one tale in the mag—three out of four ain't bad, as they say.—Ed.

Dear Editor:

Congratulations on the perfect comic! Here in England, we have nothing like these mags. They're just great. One snag, however. We only get them in fits and starts, so I find myself waiting for a couple of months for the second part of a two-part story!

I hope you continue to print the fine magazines, and to all of those people over there who complain about these mags:

You don't know how LUCKY you are!!!

Shiela Jackson, Frampton-on-Severn,
Gloucestershire, England

You tell 'em, Shiela! And we hope you don't have to wait too long to see your letter in print.—Ed.

Dear Editor:

I am typing in favor of a Clark Kent at Metropolis University series, like the story in ACTION #404. "The Day They Killed Clark Kent" was one of the finest stories Leo Dorfman ever scripted (and he has written many classics). Curt and Murph portrayed it as no one else can.

The story was amusing (all the initiation scenes were priceless); exciting (when they hit Clark with the prod) and had a very important moral (never use anything dangerous).

I expect to see this series launched, or else!

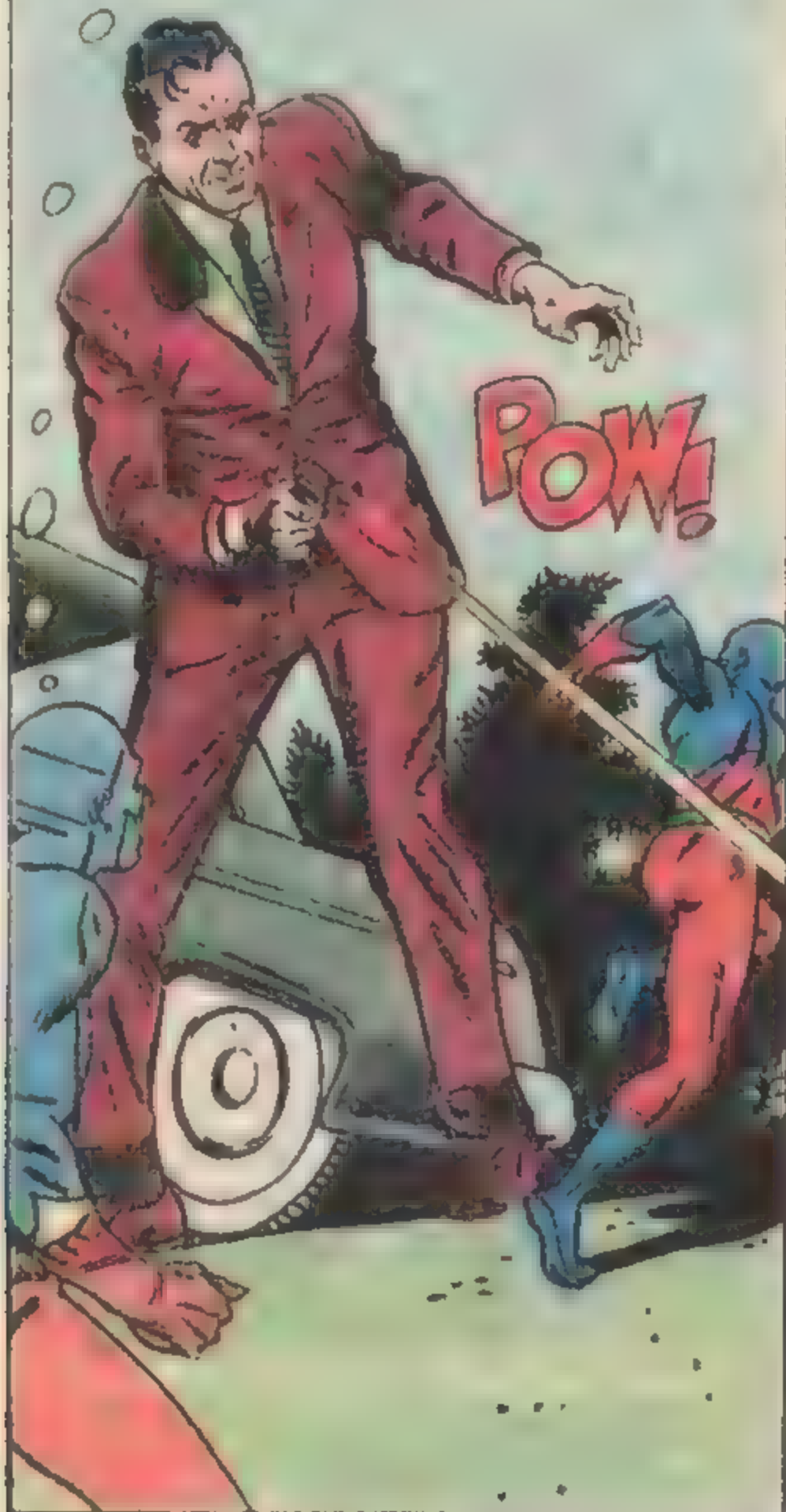
Joe Farara, Canton, Mass.

Consider it launched—though we can't promise a college story every issue. If that doesn't satisfy you—remember, never use anything dangerous! Especially on us!—Ed.

The ATOM'S PHANTOM DOUBLE! PART 2

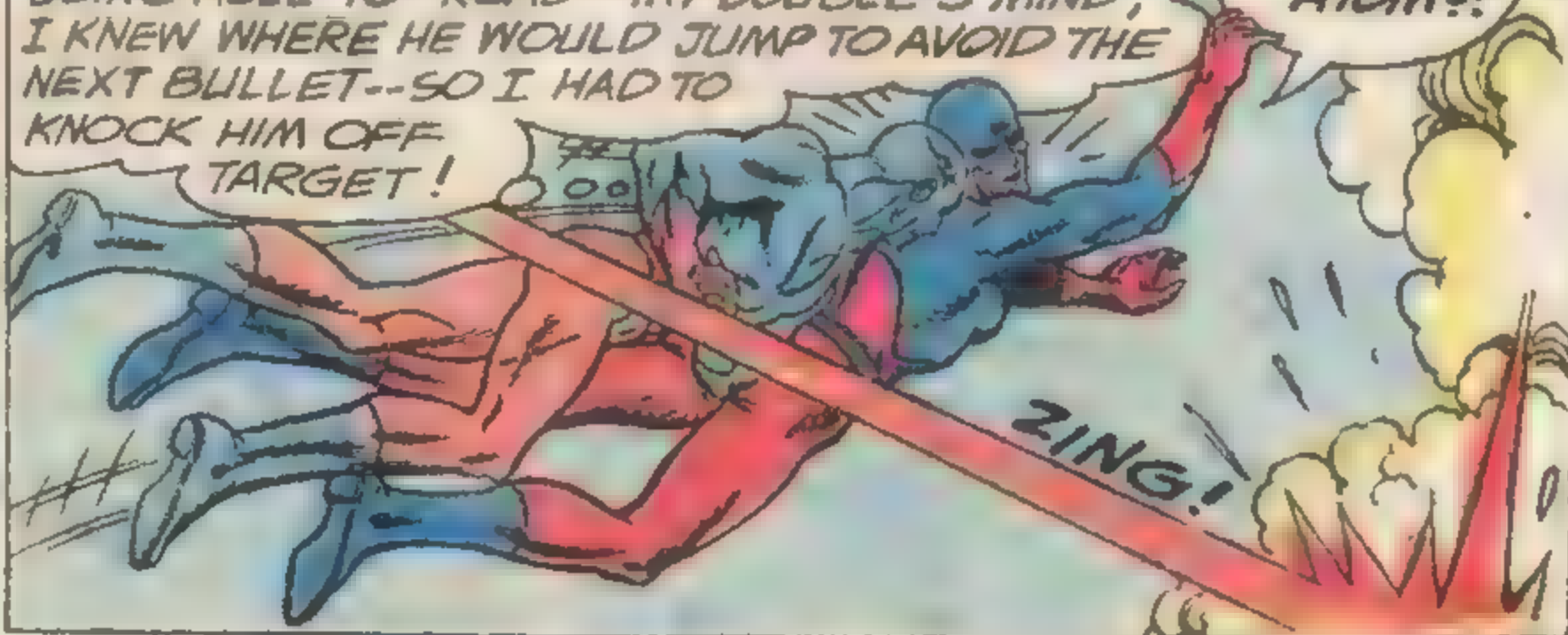
BY TELEKINETIC ENERGY ON MENTAL CONTACT WITH HIS PHYSICAL SELF, THE PHANTOM RAY PALMER INSTANTLY TRANSFERS HIS ETHEREAL BODY TO THE LONELY COUNTRY ROAD--AND REDUCES HIMSELF IN SIZE TO THAT OF A GHOSTLY ATOM...

THAT GUNMAN JUST MISSED THE REAL ATOM WITH HIS SHOT! CAN'T TAKE ANY CHANCES THAT A FOLLOW-UP BULLET HITS ITS MARK!



HURLING HIMSELF FORWARD, THE ETHEREAL MITE ROCKETS INTO THE REAL MIGHTY MITE...

BEING ABLE TO "READ" MY DOUBLE'S MIND, I KNEW WHERE HE WOULD JUMP TO AVOID THE NEXT BULLET--SO I HAD TO KNOCK HIM OFF TARGET!



THE GUNMAN HESITATES IN THE FACE OF TWO ATOMS, AND IN THAT PAUSE...

NO TIME TO QUIZ THAT OTHER ATOM NOW--NOT WITH ANOTHER BULLET BEING AIMED AT ME!

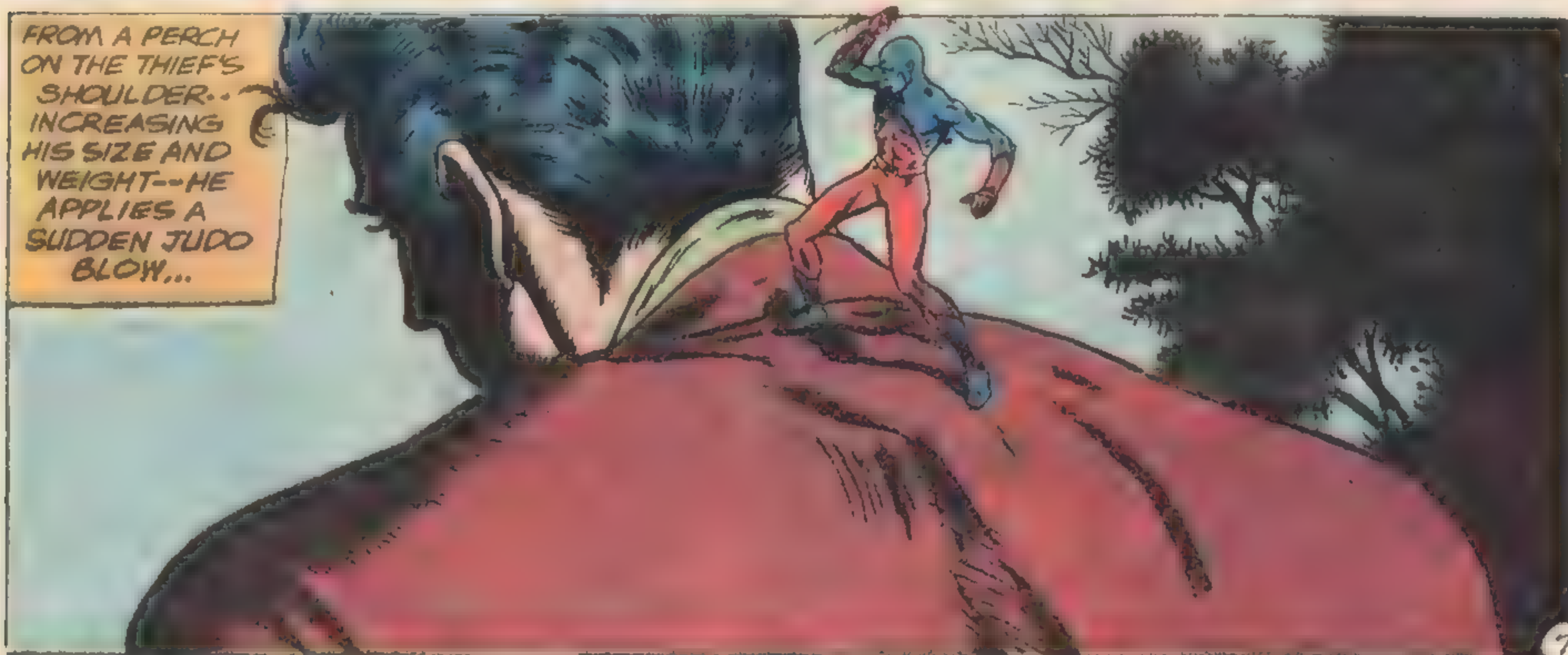


SHRINKING SO SMALL THAT HE CANNOT BE SEEN, THE TINY TITAN CLIMBERS UP THE TROUSER LEG OF THE BEWILDERED GUNMAN...

WHERE'D HE GO? HOW CAN I SHOOT SOMEBODY I CAN'T SEE?



FROM A PERCH ON THE THIEF'S SHOULDER--INCREASING HIS SIZE AND WEIGHT--HE APPLIES A SUDDEN JUDO BLOW...



AS ONE CRIMINAL DROPS UNCONSCIOUS,
OFF TO ONE SIDE...

THAT TAKES CARE
OF THIS ONE!
NOW I'LL KNOCK
OUT MY OTHER
SELF--AND
TAKE HIM BACK
TO THE LAB-
ORATORY
WHERE I
CAN WORK
THE IDENTITY
SWITCH ON
HIM!



AS THE TWO ATOMS FACE ONE ANOTHER...

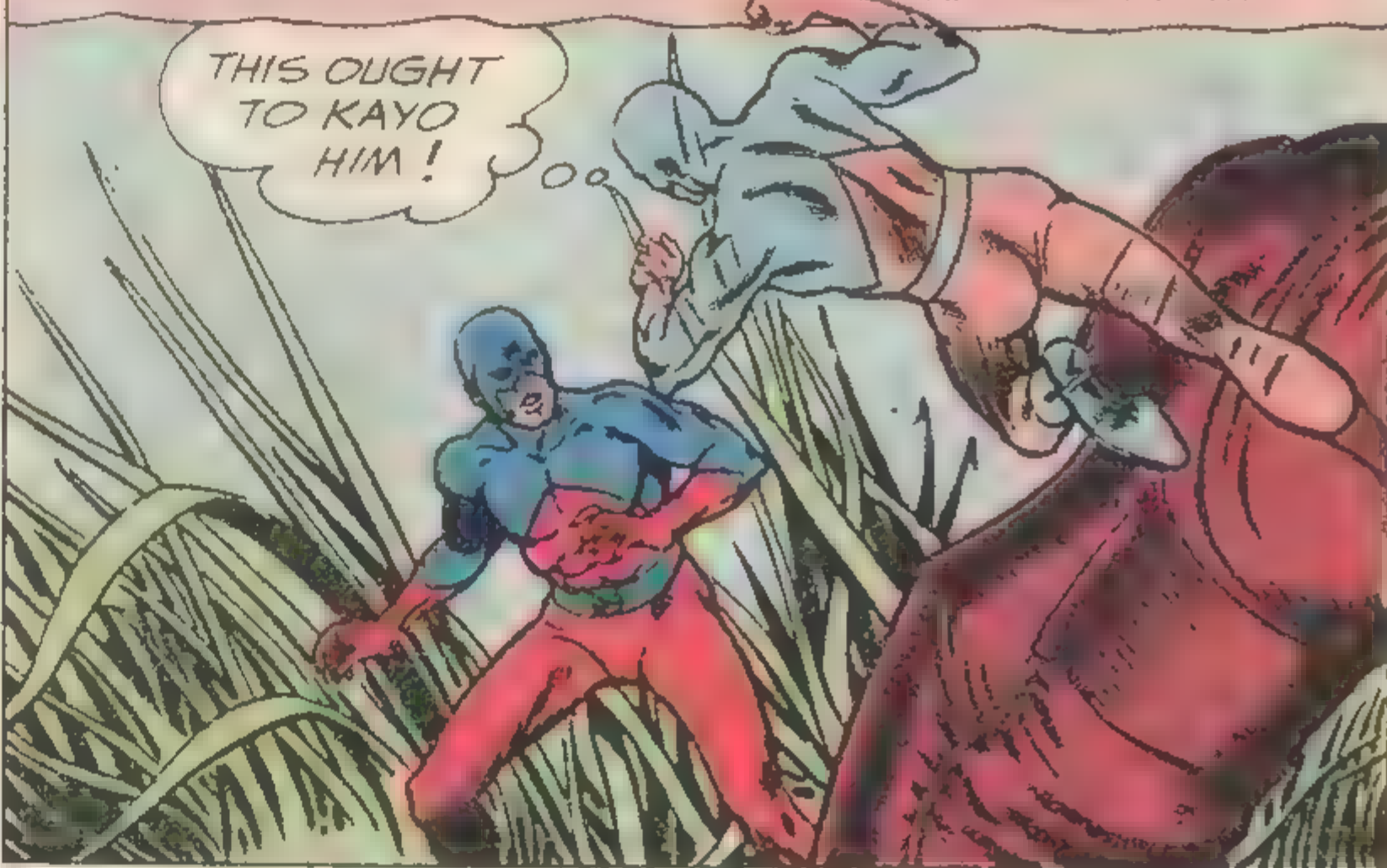
ALL RIGHT, WHO ARE YOU?
HOW COME YOU LOOK
LIKE ME?

LATER, PAL! RIGHT NOW
I HAVE SOMETHING
MORE IMPORTANT
TO DO!



MAKING HIMSELF LIGHT, THE PHANTOM ATOM LEAPS
UPWARD OVER HIS SURPRISED DOUBLE AND PREPARES
TO UNLEASH A POWERFUL HAYMAKER...

THIS OUGHT
TO KAYO
HIM!



BUT THE REAL ATOM REACTS WITH
TRAINED PRECISION--GRASPING HIS
RIVAL'S ARM AND...

I DON'T GET
THIS! FIRST
HE SAVES MY
LIFE--AND THEN
HE ATTACKS ME!



FOLLOWING UP HIS ADVANTAGE, HE DIVES IN
AMONG THE GRASSES ON THE SIDE OF THE
ROAD, AND...

I'M DETERMINED TO CLEAR
UP THIS MYSTERY--
HERE AND NOW!

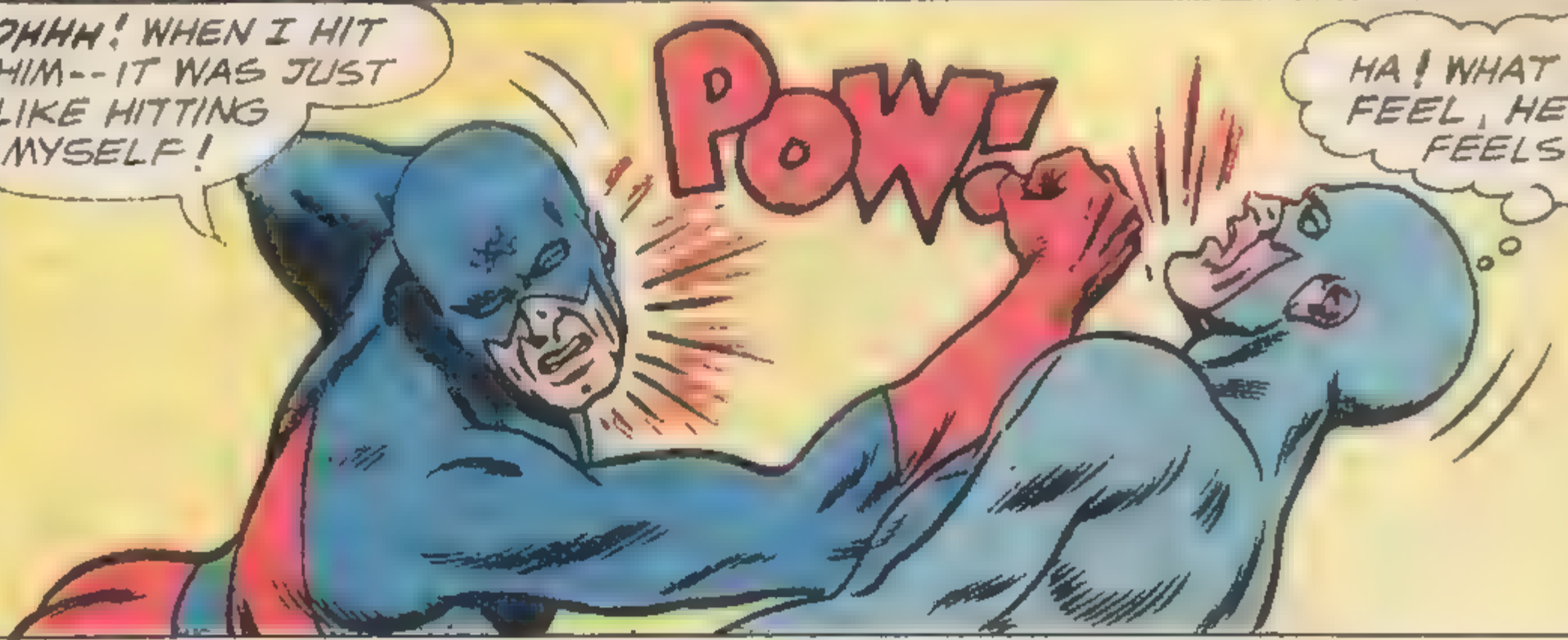


HE DROPS LIKE A PLUMMET, FULL ON HIS PHANTOM FOE-- BUT EVEN AS HIS FIST SLAMS HOME-- THE REAL ATOM EXPERIENCES A SHARP PAIN ON HIS OWN JAW...

OH!! WHEN I HIT HIM-- IT WAS JUST LIKE HITTING MYSELF!

POW!

HA! WHAT I FEEL, HE FEELS!



AND EVEN MORE AMAZING, WHEN HIS GHOSTLY ALTER EGO SLUMPS UNCONSCIOUS-- SO DOES THE REAL TITAN!...



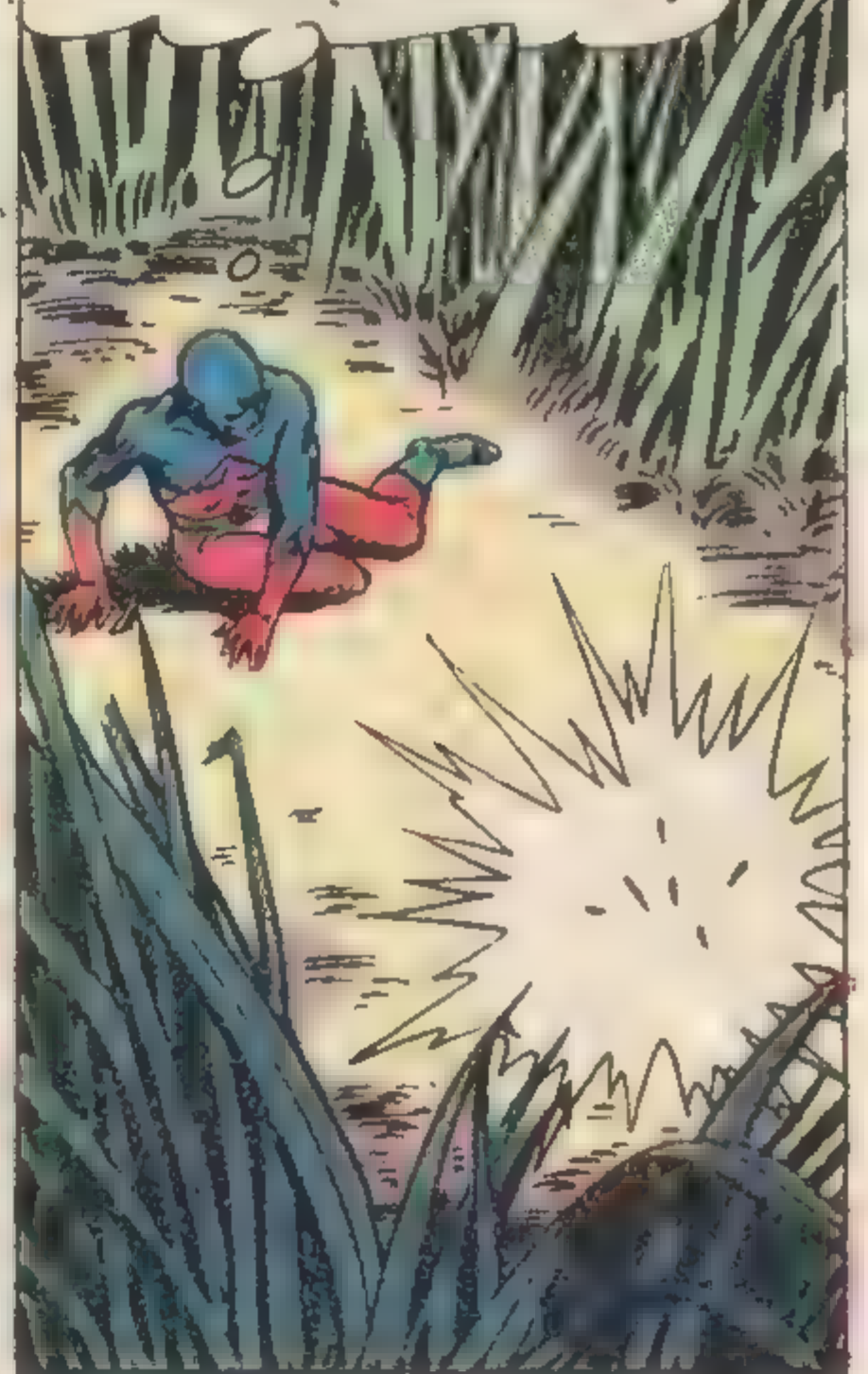
MINUTES LATER, BOTH MIGHTY MITE'S COME TO...

HE DOESN'T REALIZE YET HE CAN READ MY MIND-- SO I'LL GET OUT OF HERE-- GO BACK BY TELE-KINETIC ENERGY TO HIS LABORATORY FOR THE OPAL RING!



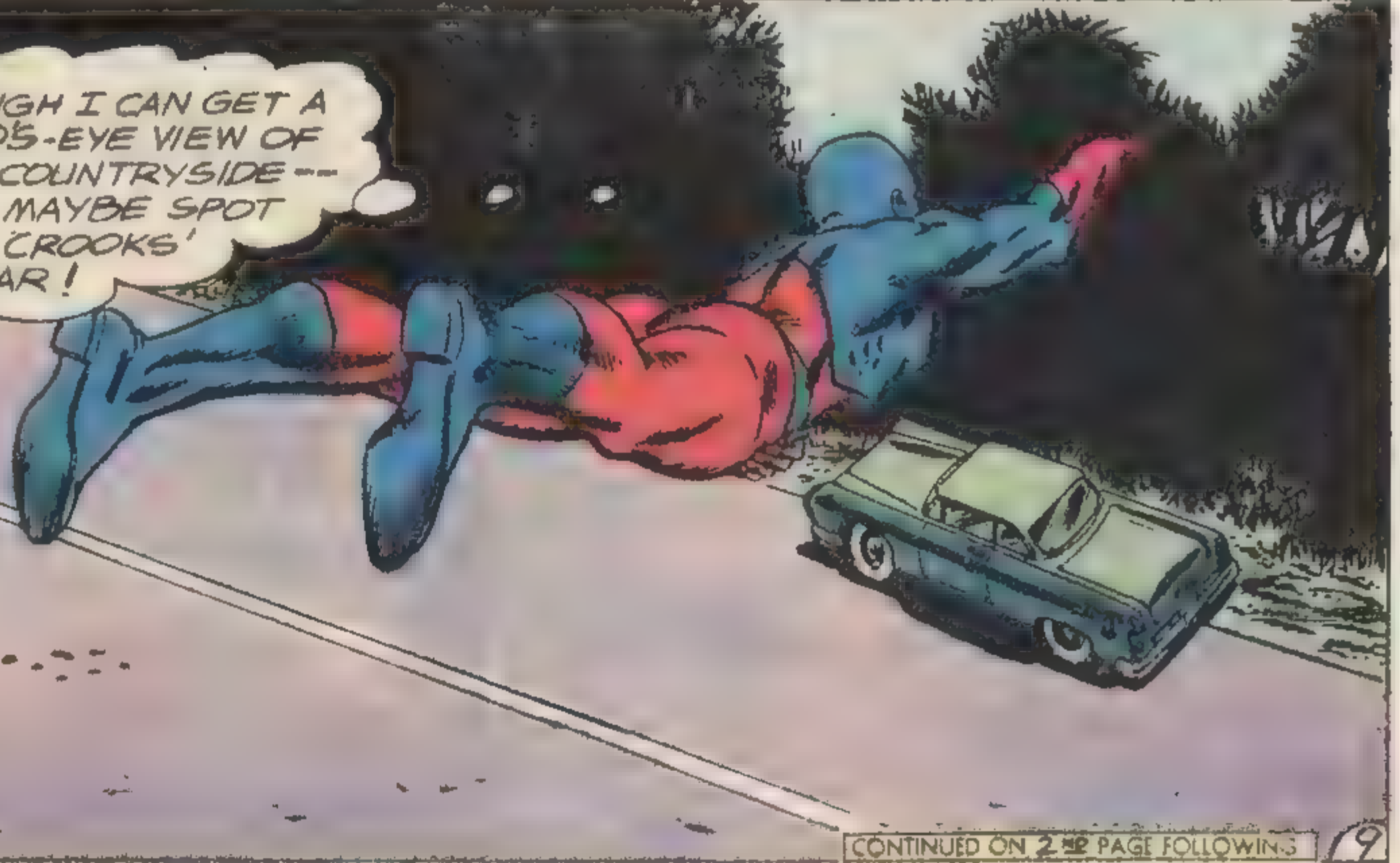
THE NEXT INSTANT...

HE'S GONE-- VANISHED FROM SIGHT! I-- I HAVE NO IDEA WHERE HE WENT-- OR WHERE HE CAME FROM! BUT RATHER THAN WASTE TIME HUNTING FOR HIM-- I'LL GO GET THOSE TWO CROOKS!



WHEN HE REACHES THE ROAD AND FINDS THE CROOKS AND STATION WAGON GONE, THE TINY TITAN REDUCES HIS WEIGHT ENOUGH TO BE BLOWN ALOFT BY A GUST OF WIND...

UP HIGH I CAN GET A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE COUNTRYSIDE-- AND MAYBE SPOT THE 'CROOKS' CAR!



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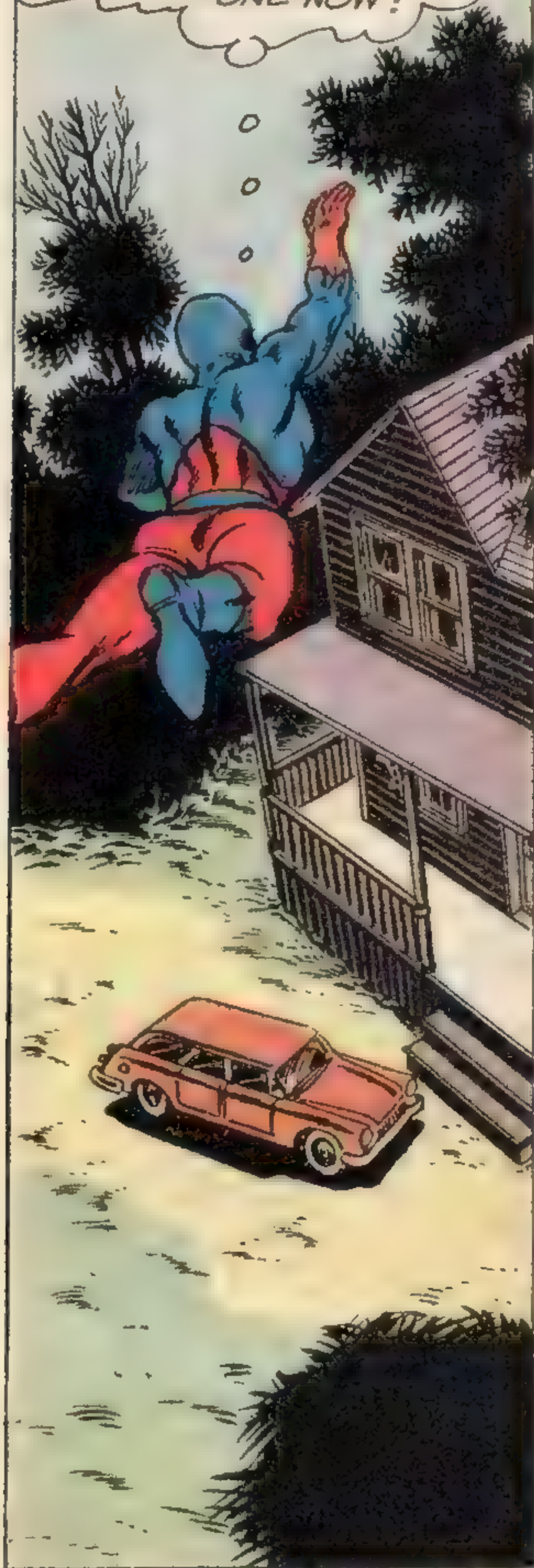
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SOARING FREELY IN THE WIND CURRENTS, THE LIGHTER-THAN-A-FEATHER **ATOM** SCANS THE SURROUNDING AREA...

THIS IS A FAIRLY DESERTED STRETCH OF COUNTRYSIDE. THERE SHOULDN'T BE MANY STATION WAGONS AROUND--THERE'S ONE NOW!



AS HE DROPS DOWN FOR A CLOSER LOOK...

IT'S THE SAME ONE, ALL RIGHT! THE CROOKS WENT INTO THE NEAR-BY HOUSE!



HE LETS HIMSELF BE WAFTEO INTO THE LIVING ROOM OF THE HOUSE THROUGH AN OPEN WINDOW...

GOOD WORK, BOYS! SOON AS I PAY YOU OFF, YOU'LL UNLOAD THAT VALUABLE SCIENTIFIC EQUIPMENT!

NOT BEFORE I DO A LITTLE "UNLOADING" MYSELF!



THE ATOM! KNOCK HIM OUT, ONE OF YOU!

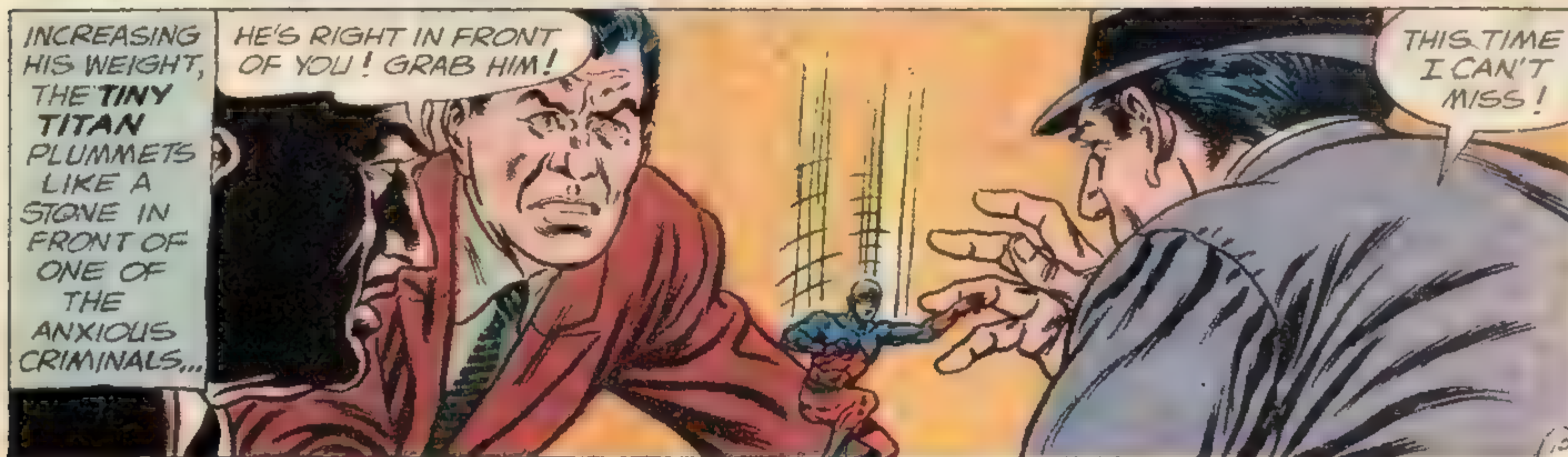
YEAH? WE TRIED THAT BEFORE-- BUT GOT NOWHERE!



INCREASING HIS WEIGHT, THE TINY TITAN PLUMMETS LIKE A STONE IN FRONT OF ONE OF THE ANXIOUS CRIMINALS...

HE'S RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU! GRAB HIM!

THIS TIME I CAN'T MISS!



THE WORLD'S SMALLEST SUPER-HERO REACHES OUT TO GRAB THE CROOK'S TIE--AND YANKS DOWNWARDS ...

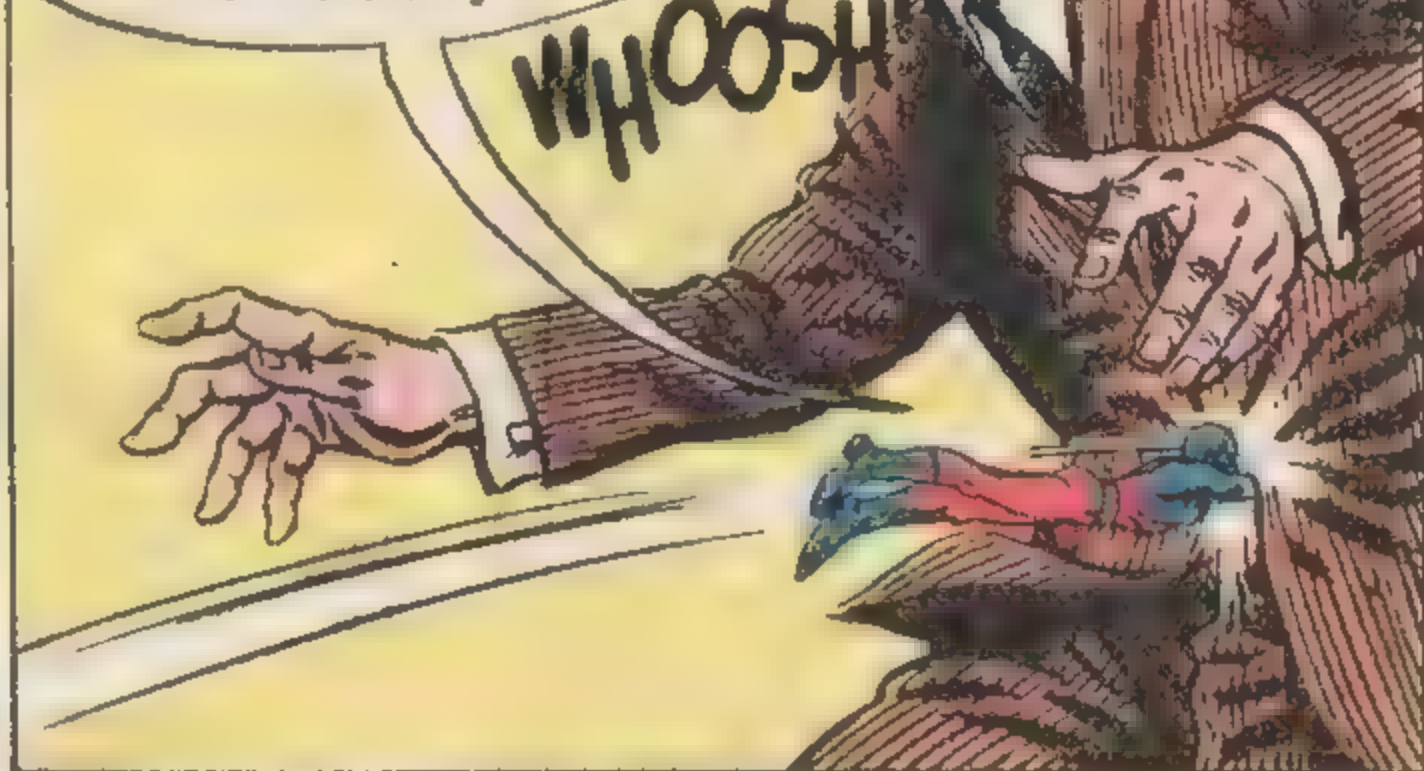


THIS CROOK'S TIE CAME IN HANDY!

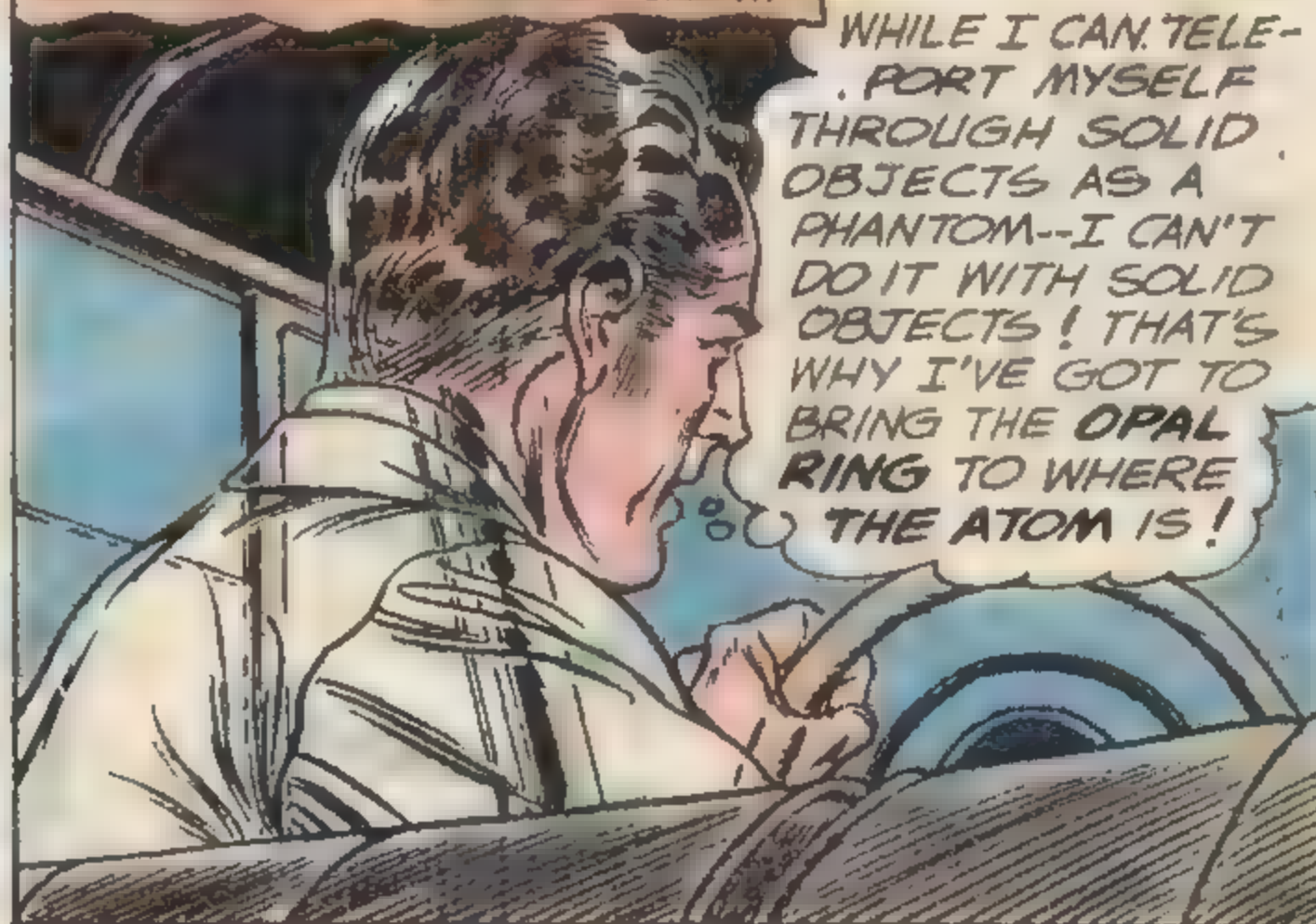
AS BOTH ROBBERS FALL FLOORWARD, HE DIVES AT THE REMAINING ONE...

THIS WILL PUT YOU OUT OF COMMISSION, TOO--LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO CALL THE POLICE AND TURN YOU OVER TO THEM!

WHOOSH!



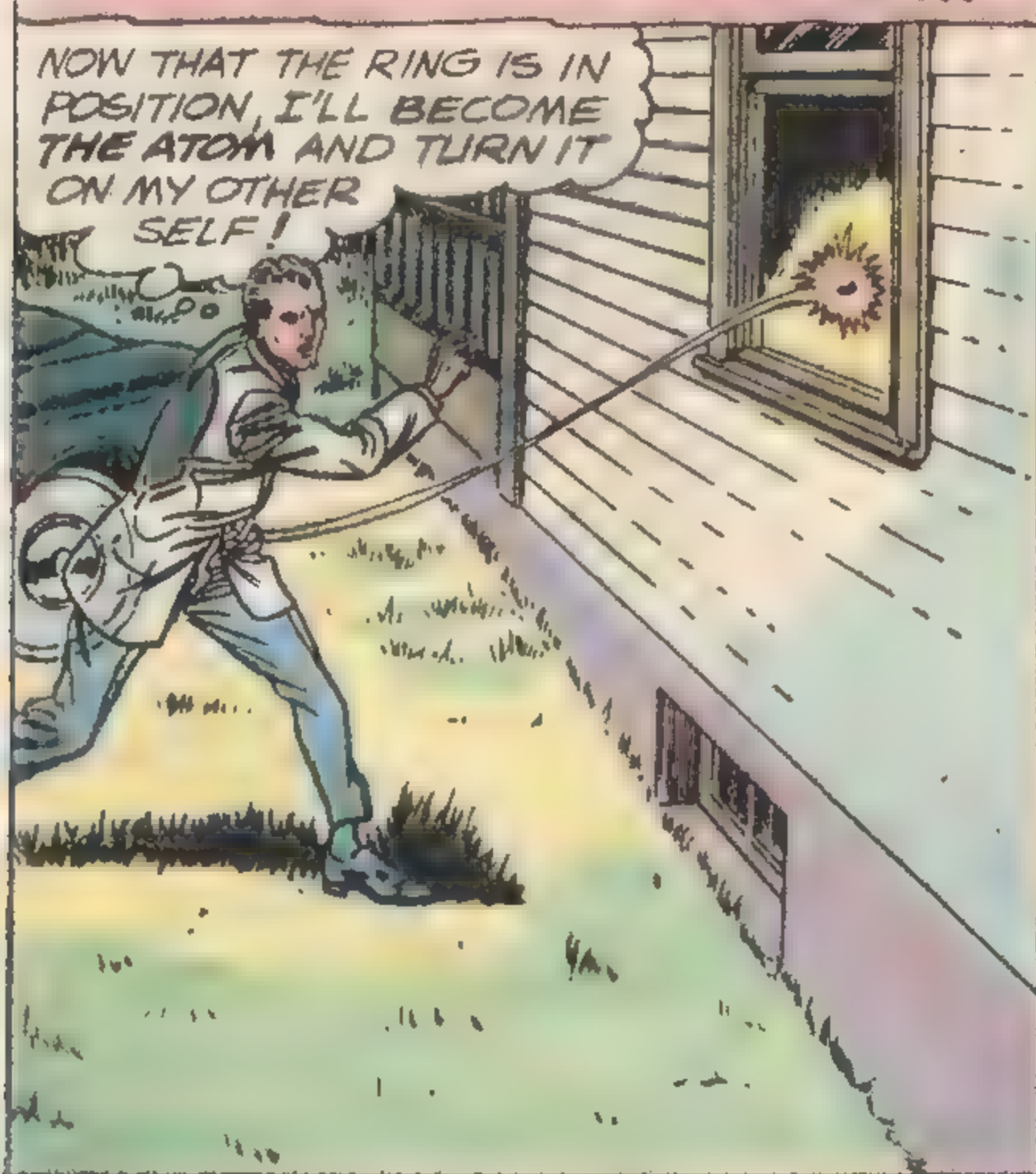
IN THE MEANTIME, HIS WORK ON THE DEADLY OPAL RING COMPLETED, THE PHANTOM RAY PALMER IS SPEEDING TOWARD THE LONELY MANSION IN A STOLEN CAR...



WHILE I CAN TELEPORT MYSELF THROUGH SOLID OBJECTS AS A PHANTOM--I CAN'T DO IT WITH SOLID OBJECTS! THAT'S WHY I'VE GOT TO BRING THE OPAL RING TO WHERE THE ATOM IS!

ARRIVING AT THE CROOK'S HOUSE HE TOSSES THE RING THROUGH AN OPEN WINDOW ...

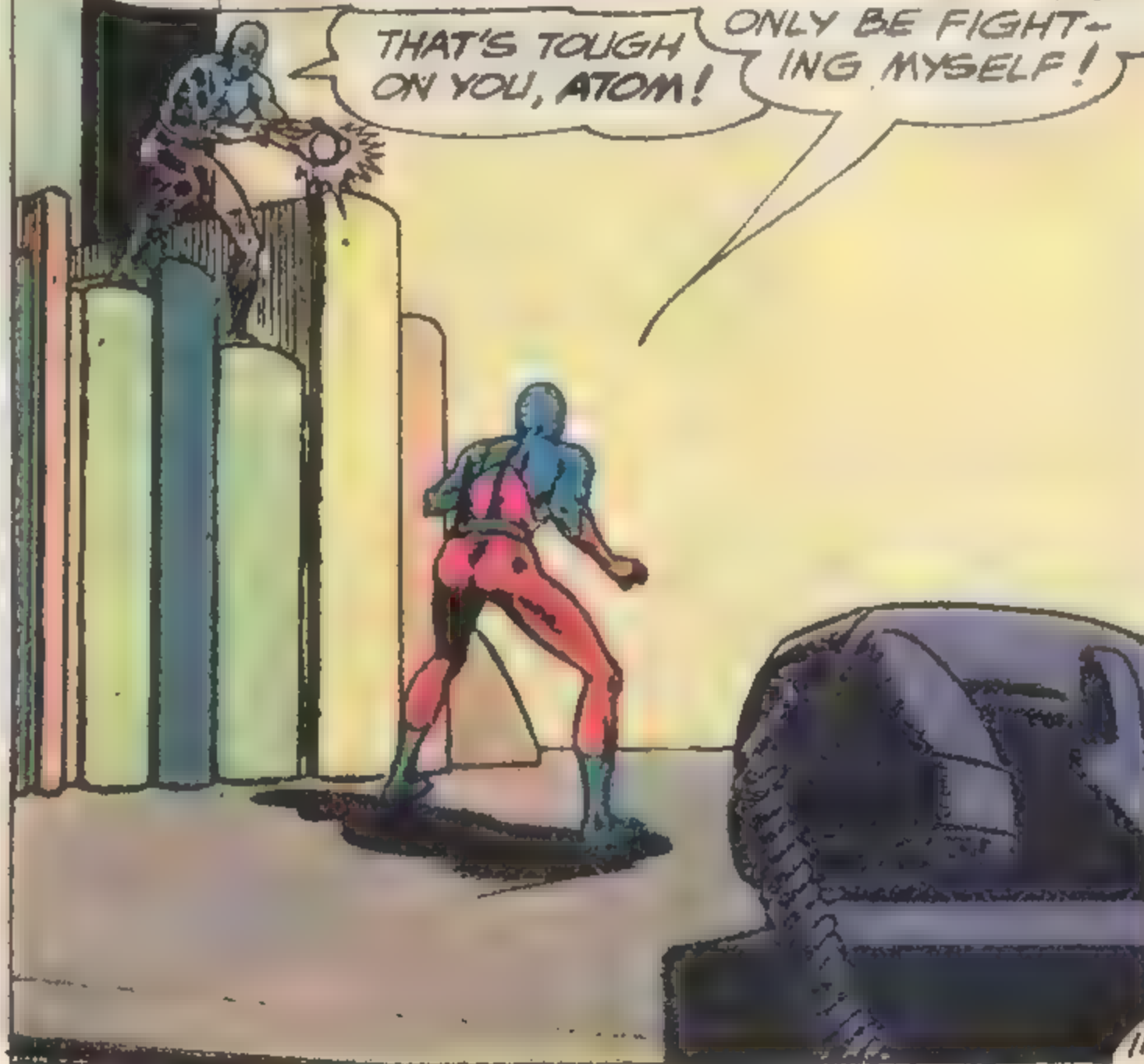
NOW THAT THE RING IS IN POSITION, I'LL BECOME THE ATOM AND TURN IT ON MY OTHER SELF!



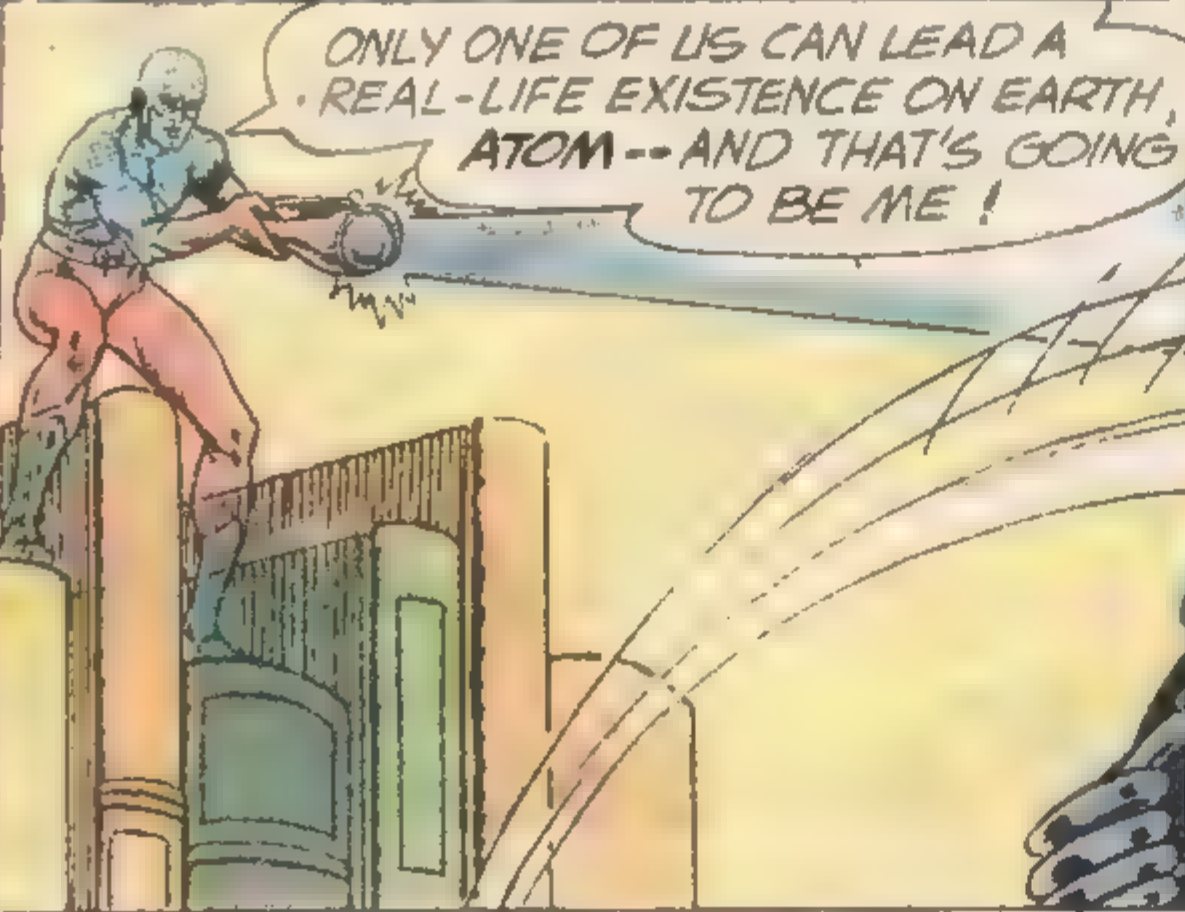
SO IT IS--THAT AS THE MIGHTY MITE IS ABOUT TO LIFT THE PHONE AND SUMMON THE POLICE...

HUH? YOU AGAIN! I CAN'T FIGHT YOU--I'D

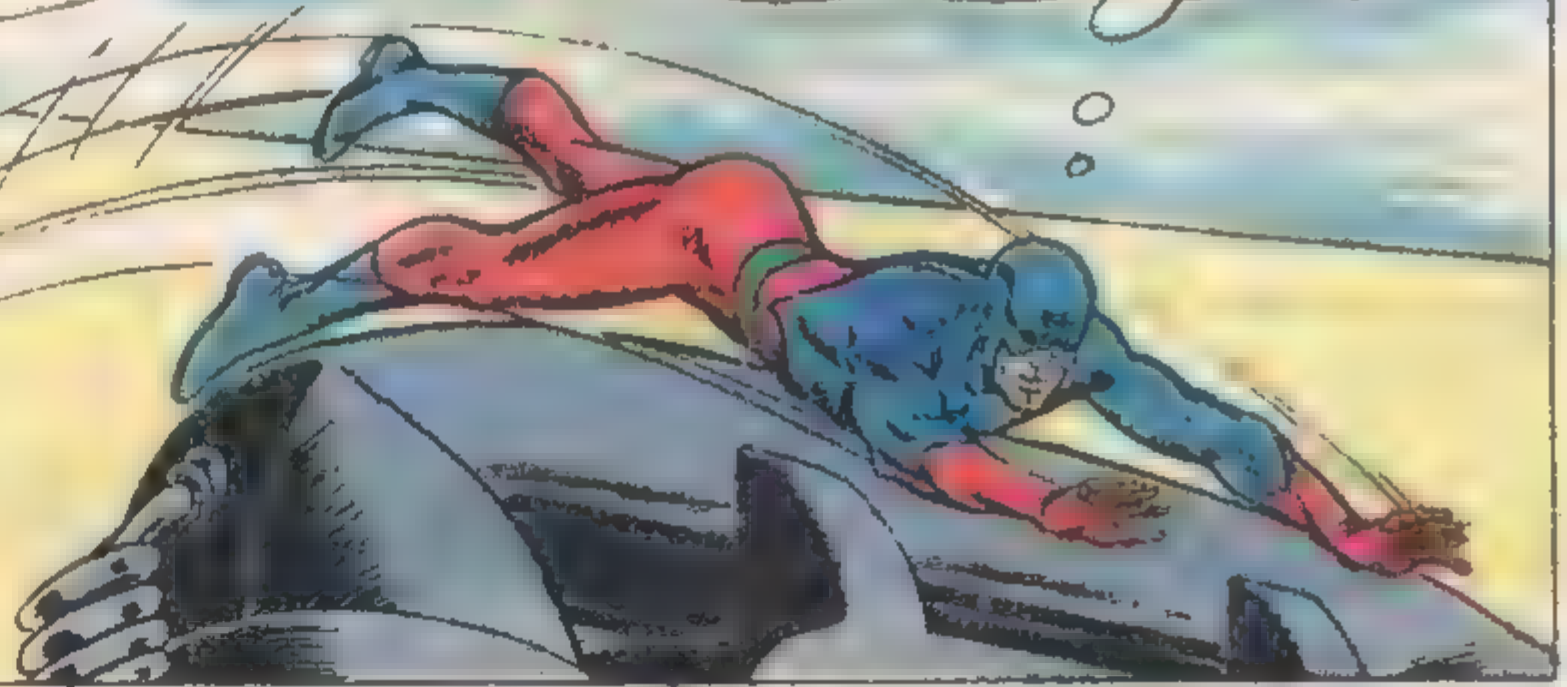
ONLY BE FIGHTING MYSELF!



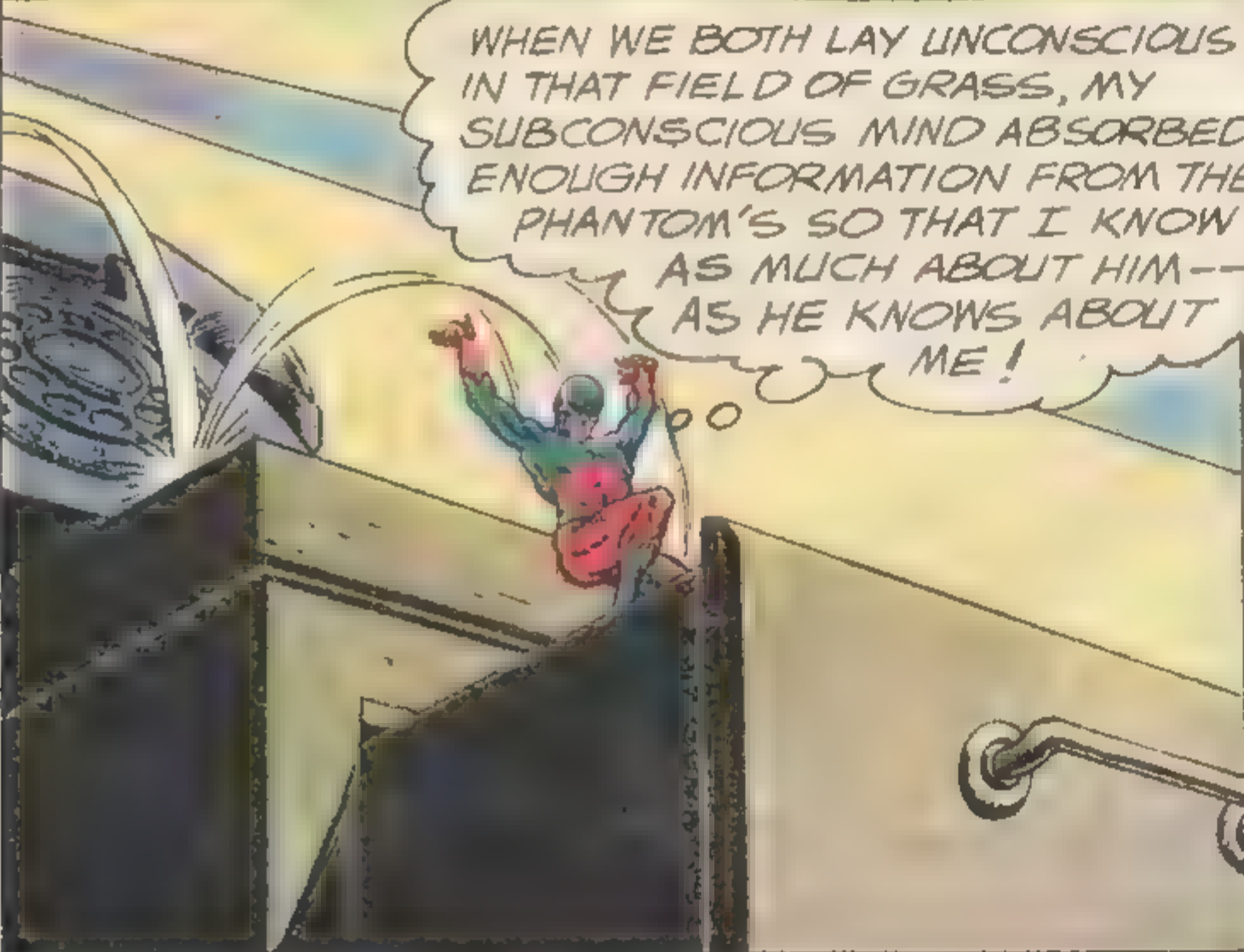
FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE REAL ATOM REALIZES HE CAN READ AND UNDERSTAND THE MIND OF HIS PHANTOM TWIN...



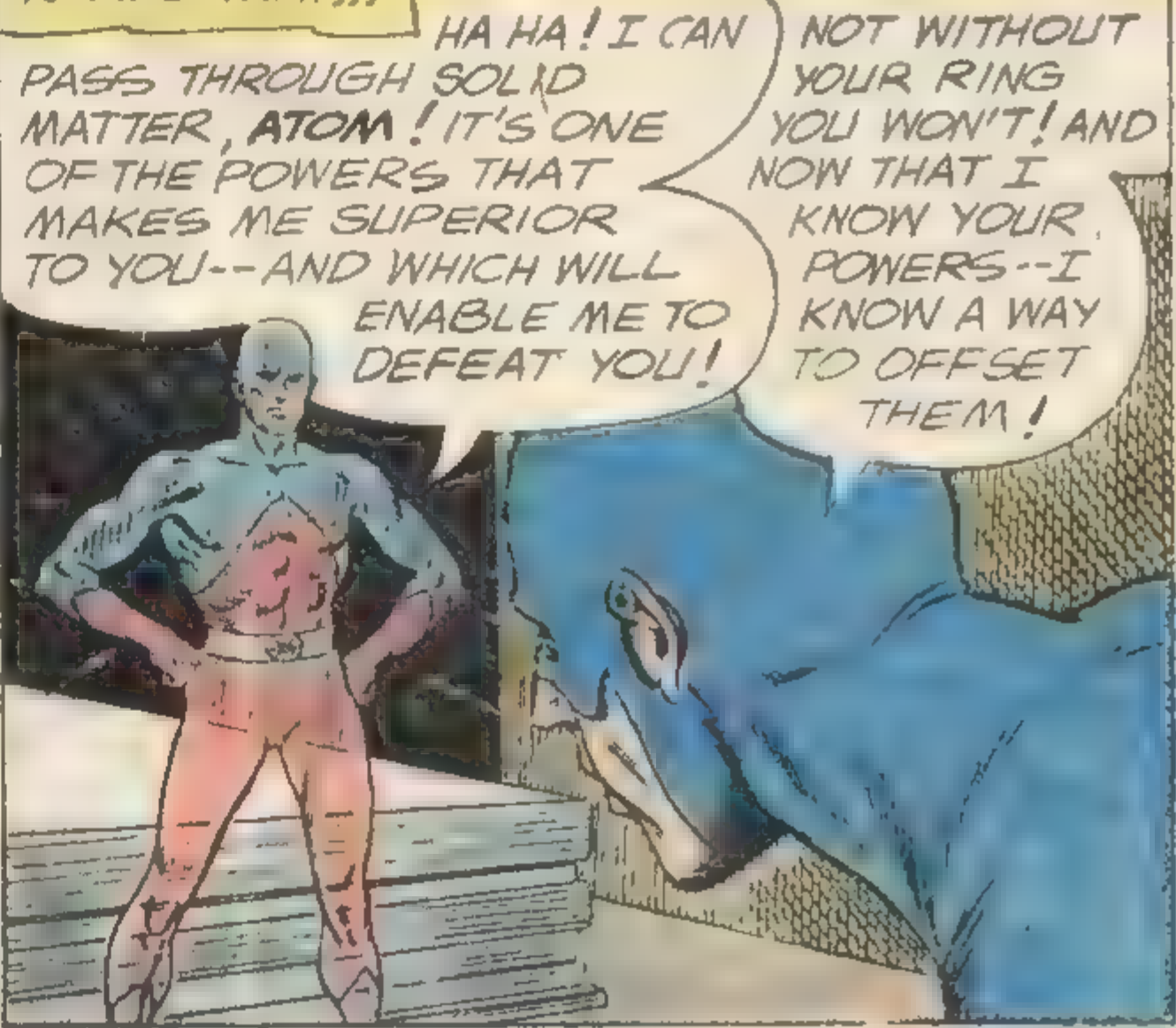
IF HE HITS ME WITH A BEAM FROM THAT OPAL RING I'LL BE TURNED INTO A PHANTOM ATOM AND HE'LL TAKE MY PLACE ON EARTH!



DESPERATELY, THE TINY TITAN DIVES OVER THE EDGE OF THE DESK AND INTO AN OPEN DRAWER...



HE YANKS THE DRAWER SHUT BEHIND HIM--ONLY TO FIND THAT...



LEAPING UPWARD AT FULL STRENGTH FROM INSIDE THE DRAWER--THE TINY TITAN SHRINKS HIMSELF SMALLER THAN A MOLECULE...

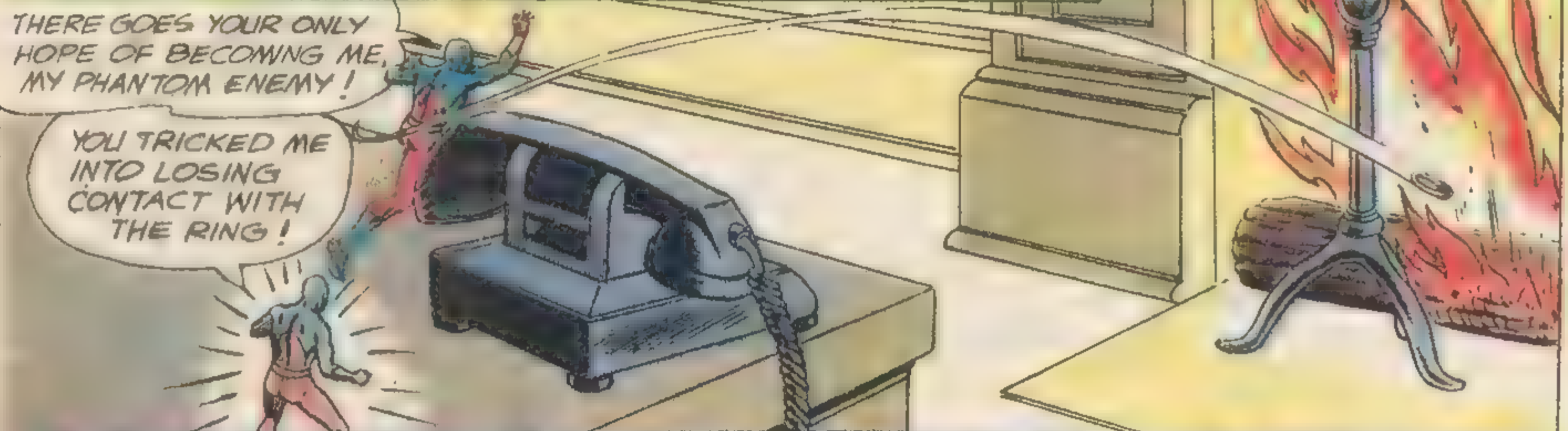
MY FIRST IMPETUS CARRIED ME UP THROUGH THE DESKTOP! NOW THAT I'M HERE--I'LL GRAB THAT RING AND...



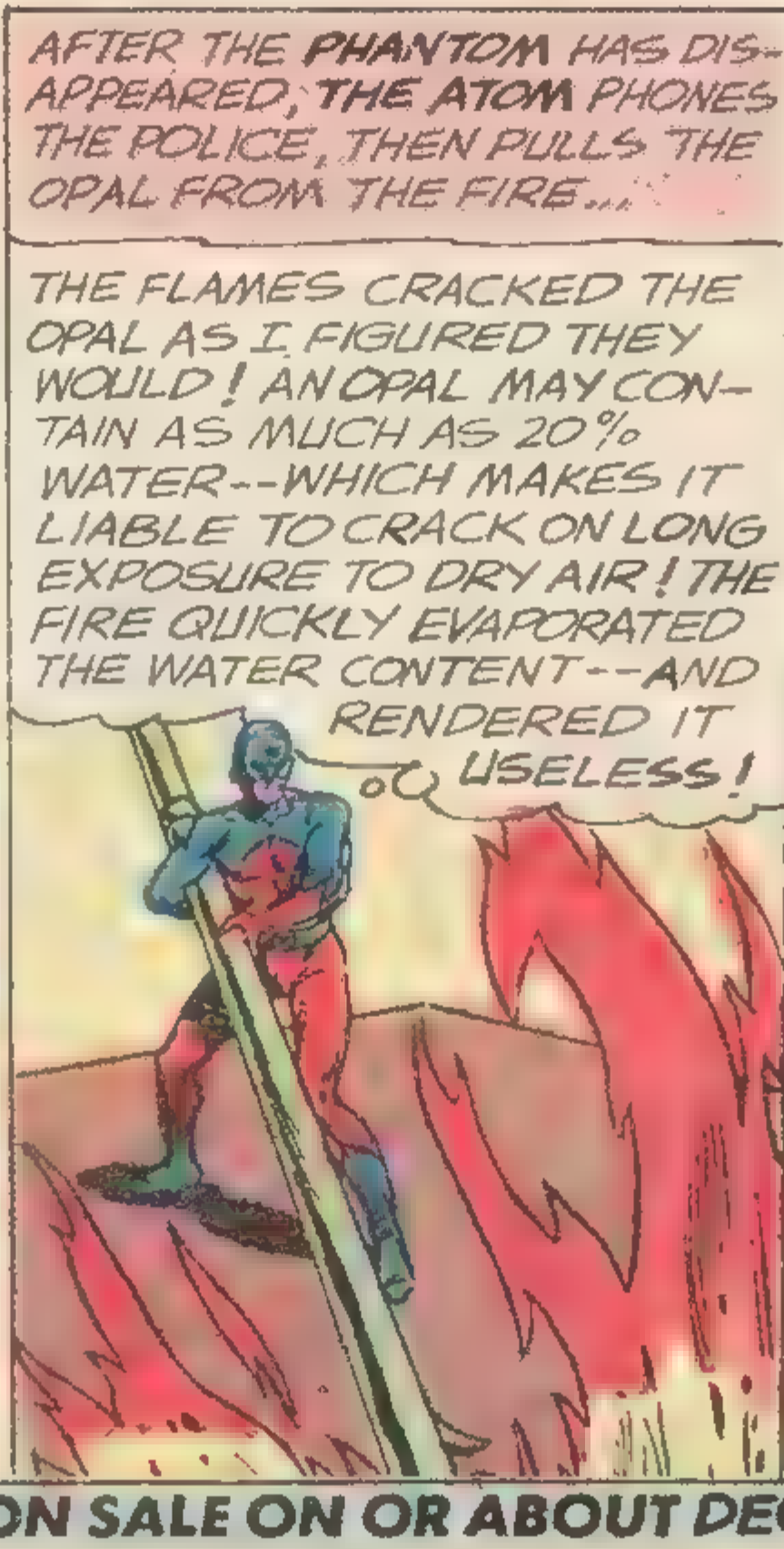
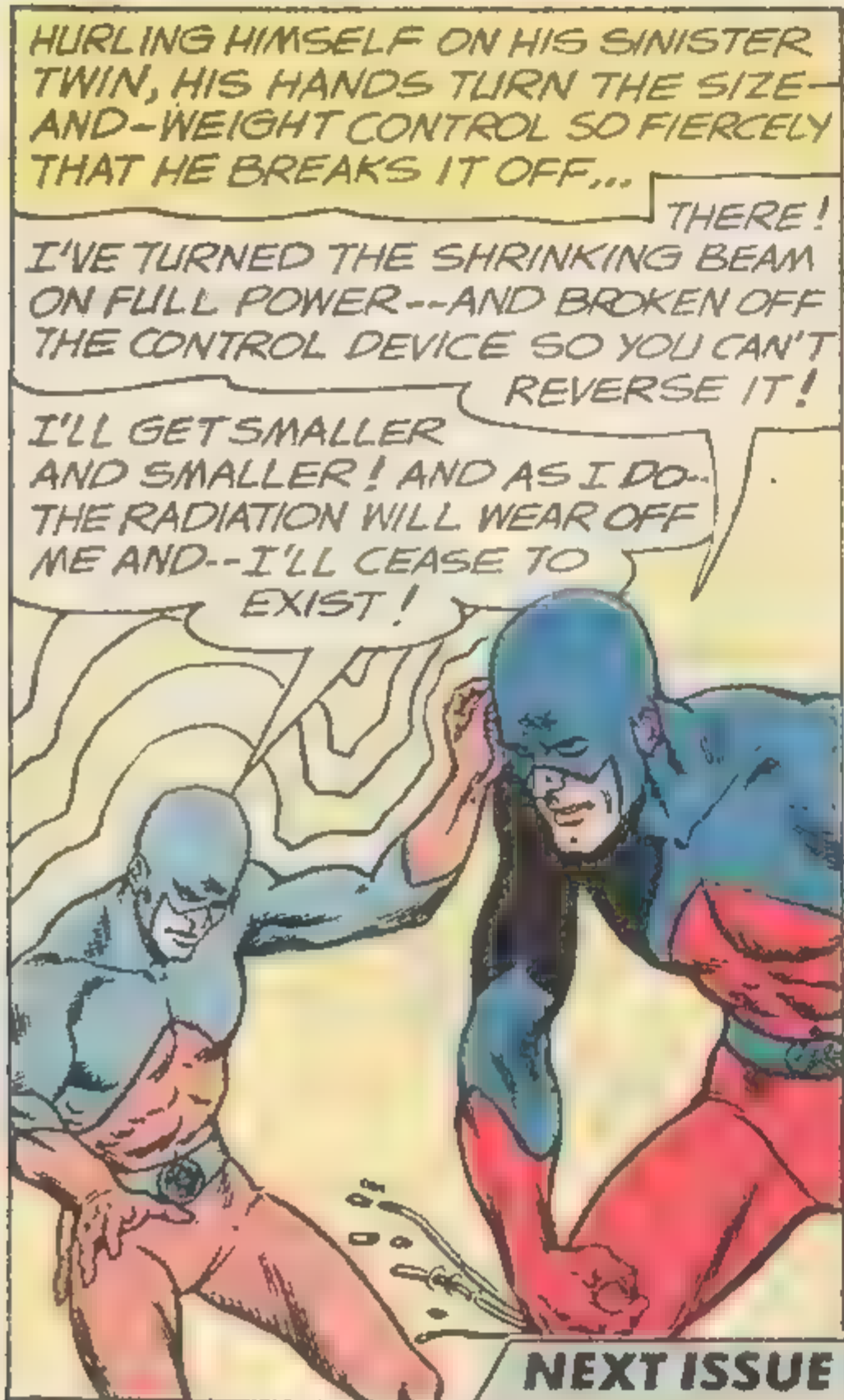
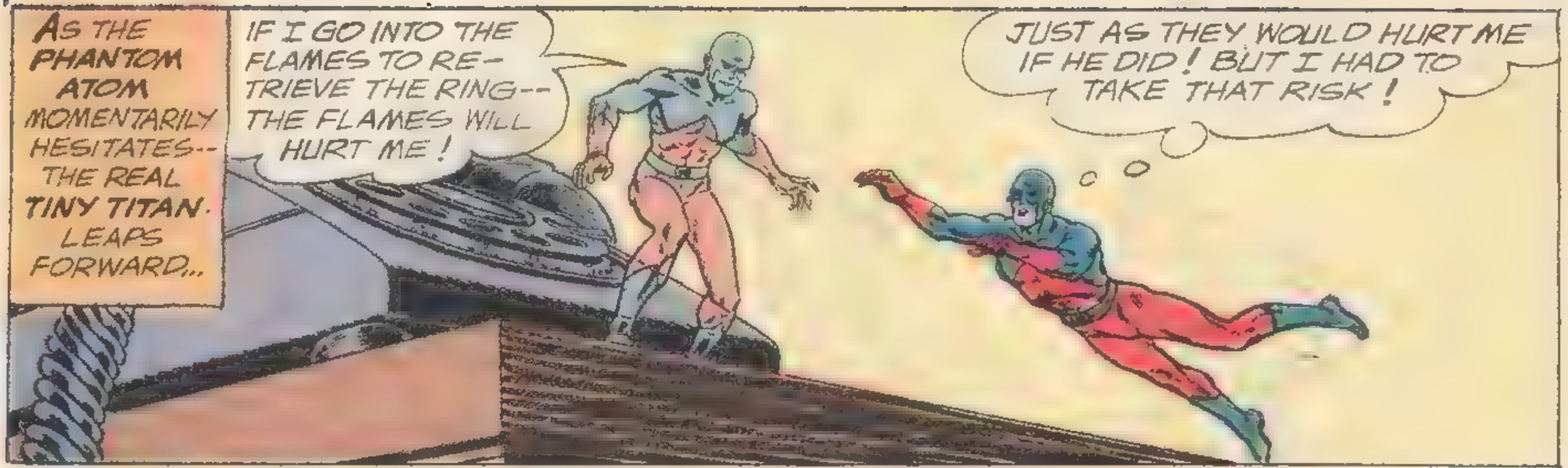
ON THE TABLETOP, ATOM MAKES HIMSELF LARGER AND HURLS THE RING INTO THE FIRE BLAZING IN THE HEARTH, EVEN AS HIS TWIN MATERIALIZES BESIDE HIM...

THERE GOES YOUR ONLY HOPE OF BECOMING ME, MY PHANTOM ENEMY!

YOU TRICKED ME INTO LOSING CONTACT WITH THE RING!



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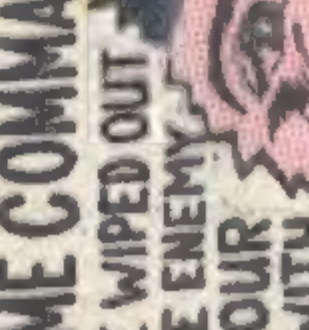
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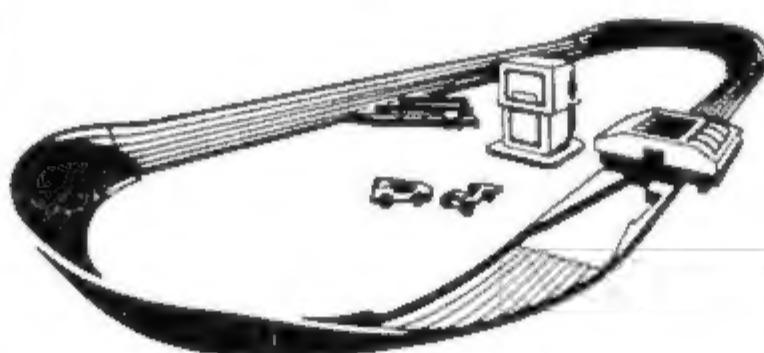
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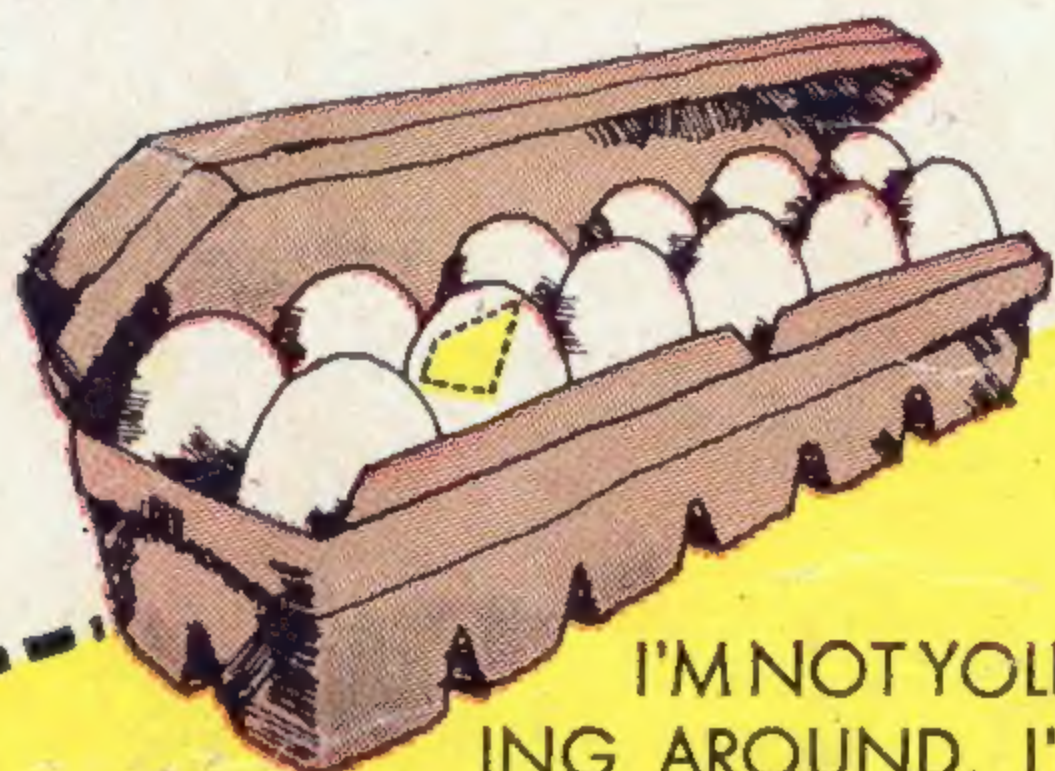
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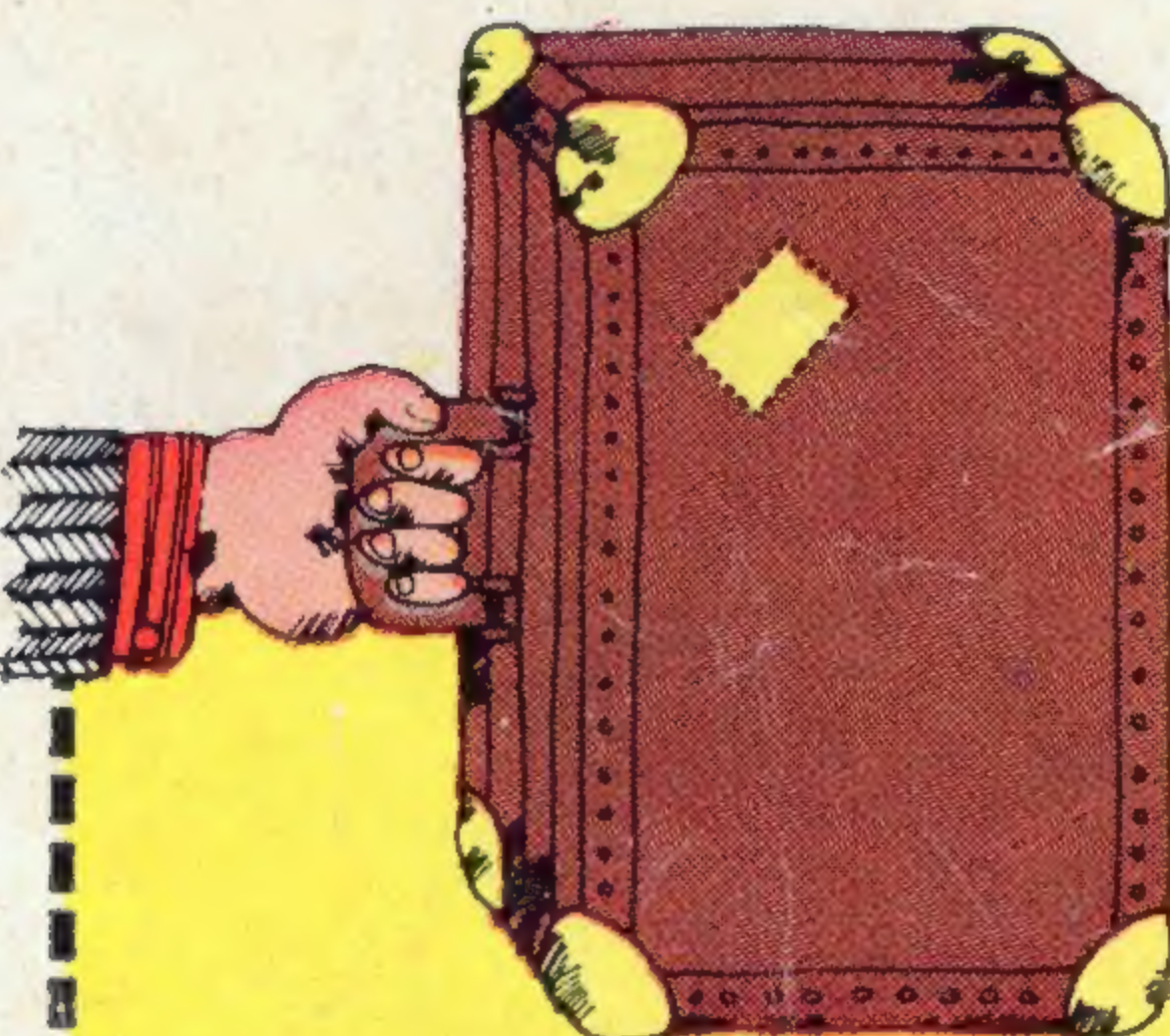
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